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CONTENT

ARTICLES

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SOFT POWER IN TÜRKİYE AND INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how the soft power of Türkiye and India has been playing significant roles in their relationship with Afghanistan in the post-9/11 incident. After the US-led invasion of the Taliban in 2001, Türkiye, which has no land border with Afghanistan, engaged as a NATO stakeholder for post-war peacebuilding in the country. Türkiye also pursued non-military engagement through humanitarian and cultural institutions and achieved the confidence of the Afghan people. On the other hand, a diverse-natured regime at the doorstep, as well as the bitter relationship with Pakistan, triggered India to approach Afghanistan closely. India utilised its 'Neighbourhood First' policy through sheer civilian participation in delivering humanitarian aid and collaborating in educational and cultural fields, significantly strengthening its relationship with Afghanistan. However, the Taliban's takeover of power has narrowed India's engagement while Türkiye's engagement has increased, though non-militarily, having significant impacts on both countries' relationships with Afghanistan. This study, firstly, conceptualises the term 'soft power.' Secondly, it explains Türkiye's historical relations with Afghanistan and the role of soft power after 9/11 to consolidate the relations. Thirdly, it explains India's historical relations with Afghanistan and the role of soft power in expanding the relations after 9/11. Then, the article compares the roles of soft power by state and non-state actors of Türkiye with those of India in developing their relations with Afghanistan and the challenges and prospects that Türkiye and India may face in the future.

Keywords: Soft power strategies, Bilateral relations, Türkiye, India, Afghanistan.

INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is of great geostrategic importance due to its location at the cross-roads of Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia. The country did not accept the domination of either the British or the Russians but rather expelled them from Afghanistan. It substantiates the nation's bravery and mighty resistance. The tremendously changing global political landscape after the 9/11 incident also opened the door for the USA to intervene in Afghanistan. However, the USA very tactfully utilised the 'war on terror' as a tool to intervene in Afghanistan, leaving heavy impacts. The USA-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation became the sole military role player in the country.

Türkiye, as one of the significant stakeholders of NATO, engaged in various rebuilding programmes—combat and non-combat—under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Regional Command Capital (RCC) of NATO in war-torn Afghanistan (Aydogan, 2021). Türkiye's engagement extracted opportunities to win over the people of Afghanistan as the former was already familiar with its humanitarian stance for refugees of various origins including more than 320,000 Afghan refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

On the other hand, though India is not a NATO member and consequently has not militarily participated in the rebuilding of Afghanistan, it engaged in the development of war-torn Afghanistan in all civilian ways. There is a historical, political, and cultural blending between Afghanistan, a Muslim-majority nation, and India, a Hindu-dominated country. It plays an important role in facilitating India's soft power in Afghanistan. The post-9/11 Afghanistan necessitated more engagement from India. Moreover, the Taliban's taking over power in 2021 and Western non-cooperation with Afghanistan left the country more vulnerable and dependent on external aid that India, as one of the closest neighbours, can provide and renew its soft power. However, Pakistan's non-cooperation for access to Afghanistan rigidified India's aid programmes. The nature of the current Taliban government may further complicate the Indian presence in Afghanistan. This study relates these facts to compare the role of Türkiye's soft power with that of India in Afghanistan after the 9/11 incident. It is based on secondary data and applies the document analysis method.

The main aim of this study is to assess how Türkiye and India have been pursuing their soft power to strengthen their relationship with Afghanistan after the changed political landscape since the 9/11 incident. Though there are various kinds of literature for assessing the role of soft power in bilateral relations, this study explores the literature regarding the role of different state actors, different institutions/organisations, and non-state actors—cultures and religion—in assessing the soft power of Türkiye and India in their post-9/11 relations with Afghanistan. Erman (2010: 39-41) illuminated how Türkiye's soldiers under NATO worked as soft power actors in Afghanistan. Tanrisever (2013: 155-170) argues that since 9/11, Ankara has used soft power to secure Afghanistan and Central Asia. Moreover, Anaz (2022: 755-771) discussed Türkiye's growing economic, political, and cultural ties more with the Asian continent than the Balkans and Africa and the role of soft power and public diplomacy in that. Moreover, Hajimineh et al. (2020: 303-332) extracted how the Ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Türkiye used language, ethnicity, and religion to boost soft power in Afghanistan since 2002. On the other hand, Ahmad (2022:

634-653) claims that India's soft power strategy in Afghanistan after 2001 became 'non-military', 'non-coercive', and cooperative. In addition, Ahmad (2019: 1520-1524) differentiated India's soft power, infrastructure assistance, from Pakistan's hard power in Afghanistan. Besides, Pate (2018: 320-351) depicts that the development and acceptance of India's 'regional power' status in the areas of 'civilisation,' 'democracy,' and 'economic-military' allows India to exercise 'regional' influence that can promote Afghanistan and India's shared benefits. Most of the studies above discussed India or Türkiye's soft power policies in Afghanistan. As mentioned above the literature, such as Ahmad (2019, 2022), (Gupta, 2023) compares India and Pakistan in Afghanistan. Ahmed and Akbar (2023) explore Iran's soft power in two of its eastern neighbours, namely, Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, no study compares and constructs the soft power of Türkiye and India in Afghanistan. This study weighs the post-9/11 soft power of Türkiye and India in strengthening their relations with Afghanistan.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOFT POWER

The term soft power was introduced by Joseph S. Nye Jr., a distinguished academic who served as the Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Nye's seminal paper, "Soft Power" was published in the renowned magazine Foreign Policy in 1990. According to him,

"Everyone is familiar with hard power. We know that military and economic might often get others to change their position. Hard power can rest on inducements ("carrots") or threats ("sticks"). But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has sometimes been called "the second face of power." A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries-admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness-want to follow it" (Nye, 2004: 05).

The foundation of a nation's soft power is predominantly derived from three key assets: its cultural appeal in regions where it garners admiration, its adherence to political values both domestically and internationally, and the perception of legitimacy and 'moral authority' surrounding its foreign policies (Nye, 2004:11).

When a nation's cultural framework encompasses universally accepted values and its policies actively advance 'values and interests' that are shared by others, the likelihood of achieving its intended results is heightened due to the establishment of relations based on mutual 'attraction' and obligation. Societies with limited ideals and insular cultures have a lower inclination to generate soft power (Nye, 2004:11).

Nye (2004:06) further argues that, in contrast to rulers in authoritarian nations who employ force and dictate directives, authorities in democratic societies are compelled to depend predominantly on a blend of 'inducement and attraction'. Soft power is a fundamental aspect of everyday 'democratic politics'. The capacity to determine choices is often linked to invisible assets, such as a captivating demeanour, cultural background, political ideologies and organisations, and policies that are perceived as 'legitimate' or possessing moral authority. When a leader embodies ideals that appeal to others to pursue, the cost of leadership is reduced.

TÜRKİYE AND AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Ottomans closely cooperated with Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, who is known by the title of 'Iron Amir' and united and modernised Afghanistan from 1880 to 1901. Afghanistan followed the USSR in recognising modern Türkiye in 1921. The current Türkiye assisted in installing Afghanistan's 'military academy, medical school, Kabul University's Political Science faculty, music conservatory, and public health service' (Erman, 2010: 39-41).

It is worth mentioning that Uzbeks and Turkmens are two Turkic ethnic groups in Afghanistan (Sahin, 2016), who can speak Turkish well. Although there is no reliable data on the ethnic distribution of the population of Afghanistan, it has been estimated that Uzbeks are 9% and Turkmens are 3% of the population (Minority Rights, 2023). Türkiye and Afghanistan have been engaging in extensive cooperation since the Taliban regime was overthrown in 2001. Türkiye paid close attention to the incident of September 11, 2001, and the difficulties Afghanistan suffered in the years that followed. The AKP government, particularly, adopted new external policies that sought to extend its influence to areas of Turkish people as well as its positive relations with all of its neighbours through the expansion of 'political and economic' ties with them. Though the Taliban took over power again, Türkiye's military and non-military engagements already achieved confidence in the people of Afghanistan. Turkish state and non-state actors working in Afghanistan can substantiate the confidence of Afghan people, playing a significant role in relations with Afghanistan.

THE ROLE OF SOFT POWER IN TÜRKİYE'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN

Turkish Ministry of National Education and Turkish Maarif Foundation

The Turkish Ministry of National Education collaborates with the Afghan Ministry of Education to run a girls' school in Jowzjan province of Afghanistan (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). The 'Turkish Maarif Foundation' was formed through a statute signed into effect on 17 June 2016. Apart from the Ministry of National Education, it is the sole body with the legal capacity to establish Turkish schools in foreign countries. The Foundation is a public institution with the mission of disseminating Türkiye's 'educational' innovations in 'preschool to higher education' and best practices to the international community at large. Most importantly, this effort continues because of the high standard of education offered by Maarif schools and the confidence of people in them. The Turkish Maarif Foundation serves a total of roughly 6,500 students across 19 campuses throughout diverse cities like Herat, Kabul, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Mazar-i Sharif, Aqcha, Maidan Wardak, and Sheberghan. One subset of the institution is all-female boarding schools. The majority of Maarif's 6,500 students are female (Kasap, 2021), which is accelerating women's empowerment in Afghanistan.

Turkish Diyanet Foundation

The Türkiye Diyanet Foundation was inaugurated on 13 March 1975, as a part of the benevolent actions initiated by the Chief of Religious Affairs of the

country. Currently, the foundation operates its programmes in 149 countries in-cluding Afghanistan (Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, 2024). On 14 January 2019, the Türkiye Diyanet Foundation (TDV) distributed 'food and blankets' to four hundred war-affected families in Balkh province's northern refugee camps in Afghanistan. The Turkish consul general in Mazar-i Sharif stated that Türkiye's goal for Afghanistan is for the country to enjoy peace, prosperity, and a promis-ing future. He also said that 'as long as the Afghan people want it, Türkiye will continue being here and extending help' (Sadat, 2019).

Moreover, TDV gives $25 in cash to 74 orphans per month in Afghanistan, and they have high hopes that the number will increase. About 250 orphans have benefited from TDV's assistance in various parts of the country. The TDV es-tablished a new orphanage in Mazar-i Sharif, providing shelter for fifty children without parents (Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, 2021). In addition, the TDV inau-gurated five 'water wells and fountains' as part of the 'A Drop of Life' initiative in Mazar-i Sharif, in the north of Afghanistan (Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, 2022).

Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD)

With the Turkish Presidential Decree in 2018, AFAD was reorganised into a government entity reporting to the Ministry of the Interior. In the past, the Prime Minister was responsible for it. The agency is dedicated to creating the required plans and helping those in need both domestically and internationally (Ministry of Interior Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, Türkiye). Follow-ing the withdrawal of 'U.S.-led NATO forces in August 2021' and the subse-quent takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban, the country found itself bereft of foreign aid. The prolonged absence of necessary assistance to safeguard the well-being of the populace in Afghanistan, a nation ravaged by conflict, has had severe economic repercussions. The responsibility of coordinating the response to the increasingly severe humanitarian situation has been delegated to AFAD. AFAD played a leading role in coordinating the humanitarian assistance ini-tiatives conducted by Turkish charitable organisations throughout the nation. Within a brief period, trains became filled with humanitarian assistance, encom-passing a wide range of provisions such as food and sanitary kits. On 23 January 2023, the seventh 'Kindness Train' full of humanitarian aid organised by AFAD successfully arrived in Afghanistan's Herat province (Daily Sabah, 2023).

Yunus Emre Institute (YEI)

Yunus Emre Institute, connected to the Yunus Emre Foundation, carries out ac-tivities for Turkish education. Cultural centres founded in foreign states conduct cultural and artistic events to promote the Turkish nation and assist in scientific research. Kabul's YEI Coordination Office launched a Turkish language course at Atatürk Children's Hospital (Yunus Emre Institute, 2024). Since its founding in 2009, the institute, which bears the name of the celebrated Turkish poet who lived from 1238 to 1320, has instructed the Turkish language to thousands of learners and reached out to more through Turkish cultural events overseas. The majority of Türkiye's development assistance goes to Afghanistan, mostly in the form of educational support. Afghanistan has one of the world's lowest 'literacy rates', with only approximately 31% of adults being literate and only about 17% of women. The traditional belief, notably in the countryside, that girls should not go to school but instead run the household, is just one factor contributing to

the 'high illiteracy rate'. Challenges with safety in the war-torn country, where the Taliban poses a persistent threat, are also obstacles for women to participate (Daily Sabah, 2021).

Türkiye Scholarships under the Office of the President for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)

Turkish government scholarships provided by the Office of the President for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) have made Türkiye a study destination for students from all over the planet. Scholars at all levels of education, from undergraduates to those working towards a doctorate, are eligible to receive these awards. The goal of the scholarship scheme is to give students a well-rounded education in Türkiye. To do this, it offers social events and training courses associated with 'arts, culture, history, and sports'. It also connects recipients with 'academics, institutions, and organisations' acting in their areas and provides them with 'academic counselling services' while they are in school. Türkiye sees the programme as an exercise in 'public diplomacy', with the hope that its graduates will serve as unofficial ambassadors for the country in the nations from which they originally hail (Daily Sabah, 2021). Roughly 5,000 students around the world receive scholarships each year under the programme (Hurriyet Daily News, 2019).

Turkish Red Crescent

Afghanistan's population is famished, destitute, and jobless as a result of a 40-year war. Over the past years, the economy has been stagnant and caused a substantial rise in Afghanistan's 'poverty and food insecurity', with 55% of the people surviving on less than $1 per day (Daily Sabah, 2019). Before American soldiers left, the Turkish Red Crescent had helped areas ruled by the Taliban. In addition, in the chaos that followed the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, the Turkish Red Crescent also delivered food to help feed those who had been forced to flee their homes (Reuters, 2021). The Turkish Red Crescent stepped up to aid those affected by the earthquake in June 2022. Türkiye has also dispatched 'Kindness Trains' stocked with aid to countries, including Afghanistan, in need (Daily Sabah, 2022).

Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA)

Following the fall of the USSR, several newly formed nation-states arose. These nations, with which Türkiye shared 'historical and cultural' affinities, held high hopes for Türkiye. These nations faced significant challenges in their journey towards building market economies. Throughout the phase of transition, they heavily depended on development assistance provided by donor nations, as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. In this situation, the establishment of TIKA in 1992 aimed to foster robust collaboration, particularly with the Turkic Republics, as well as within the natural geographical region that holds historical and cultural significance to Türkiye (TIKA, 2024).

TIKA provided medical treatment to more than 12 million Afghans from 2005 to 2022 through the Afghan-Turkish Friendship Hospital in Maymana of the Faryab region and the Children's Hospital in Sheberghan of the Jowzjan region. It was by a contract with the Afghan Health Ministry. Additionally, the Maymana Midwife Training School was founded by TIKA in 2010. The institution

also has an 'emergency service', 'polyclinic', 'general surgery', 'paediatrics', and a 'vaccination' facility. Approximately 94 women have received training to become midwives there. Additionally, TIKA worked across the nation to construct clinics that offer fundamental and comprehensive medical care, as well as to purchase home furnishings and materials for hospitals (Anadolu Agency, 2022). Moreover, as part of a collaboration with Balkh University of Afghanistan, TIKA inaugurated the Department of Turkish Language and Literature on 26 December 2023, at the university (Daily Sabah, 2023). As seen in this example, the Turkish language is being taught extensively in Afghanistan and many Turkish Language and Literature Departments are also soft power centres operating in Afghanistan (Nazary, 2018).

Turkish TV Serials

In Afghanistan, where Indian television programmes were formerly predominant, Turkish television programmes are topping ratings benchmarks. Due to the similarity between Turkish 'culture' and their family composition, Afghans enjoy watching 'action', 'crime', 'romance', and drama-type programmes on television. To prevent adverse reactions from religious sections and Taliban adherents, Afghan television, which is cautious in designating TV series, favours ones that are suited to Afghan culture. Fifty of Afghanistan's national and regional TV stations air dubbed versions of Turkish TV programmes in Pashto and Persian. Diriliş Ertuğrul, which is referred to as 'Uprising' in Afghanistan, is a weekly programme on three channels that recounts the history of the emergence of the Ottoman Empire. 'Muhteşem Yüzyıl' (Magnificent Century), 'Paramparça' (Shattered), 'Sen Anlat Karadeniz' (You Tell Me Black Sea), and 'Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki' (As Time Passes By) are a few other programmes that are popular. Türkiye and Afghanistan share many 'cultural, historical, and religious' elements, which has increased consumer appetite for Turkish goods (Sadat, 2019). People who suffer from 'electricity' and internet difficulties in the countryside, travel to urban areas to purchase and download the episodes onto a 'memory card' or a 'flash drive' and then play them at home with their families. Even selling Turkish TV programmes brings in a lot more money than selling phones does (Daily Sabah, 2022).

**INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The Indo-Afghan relations possess deep-rooted historical and cultural ties. This relationship extends beyond the governments of both countries and has a profound historical connection through interactions between the people. Historically, the western part of Afghanistan has served as a crucial link between India and Afghanistan. Both countries share a historical resemblance. In addition, despite the strategic and political planning of all the states in the region, the relations between India and Afghanistan remained amicable. The Indo-Afghan ties experienced a solitary rupture when India acknowledged the Soviet regime in Afghanistan. Furthermore, throughout the civil conflict in Afghanistan, the Indian government provided financial assistance to Afghanistan. In 1990, India allocated substantial US cash to Afghanistan through the United Nations (Ali, 2019).

Under India's 'Look East' and 'Neighbourhood First' policies in the 1990s, India initiated a few bilateral educational cooperation projects in neighbouring countries, albeit with limited scope and quantity. Since 2002, India commenced active participation in 'scholarship diplomacy', wherein it has significantly expanded its provision of scholarships (Tang, 2021). Moreover, India's strategy of soft power diplomacy in Afghanistan focuses on 'nation-building and political stability' as a means to win over Afghan citizens' 'hearts and minds' and improve India's diplomatic and cultural ties to the country (Tandon, 2019).

India views Afghanistan as a prospective pathway for gaining entry to energy resources in Central Asia. The country is strategically considering Afghanistan as an option to mitigate and counterbalance the expanding influence of China in the 'economic and energy domains' of Central Asia. India was engaged in the construction of a port at Chabahar, Iran, with the potential to establish a connection to the 'Iranian hinterland'. This development holds the promise of facilitating the transportation of Indian commodities to Afghanistan, effectively circumventing the need to rely upon Pakistan as a transit route. Afghanistan exhibits promising potential as a destination for Indian 'goods and business' enterprises (Kiran, 2009). Thus, the more India gains economic access to Afghanistan, the more it favours India to apply soft power in Afghanistan as the economy is one of the most significant elements of soft power.

India's soft power strategy after 2001 is often held up as an example of success because it avoided providing soldiers by opting for a low-key policy centred on diplomatic backing for Hamid Karzai's new administration and on civilian participation in 'reconstruction and rehabilitation' in Afghanistan (Kugiel, 2017). Hymans (2009) argued that Afghanistan emerged as the initial instance of an intricate soft power tactic in Indian external policy (cited in Kugiel, 2017). A big part of this approach involved giving a lot of money to help with development, collaborating on education and culture, focusing on 'trade and investments', providing diplomatic support, and facilitating communication (Kugiel, 2017).

After the US-led attack overthrew the Taliban, Afghanistan became a focal point of national debate. Since 2002, President Karzai's range of 'visits' to India, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's two visits in 2005 and 2011, current Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kabul in 2014, and reciprocal visits of foreign ministers, lawmakers, junta 'officials', and 'civil society' members for high-level conversation have occurred (Kugiel, 2017).

Furthermore, the Agreement for 'Strategic Partnership', signed between India and Afghanistan, on October 4, 2011, marked the culmination of ten years of low-key participation by the Indian administration in Afghanistan. This all-encompassing agreement aimed to deepen ties in four crucial domains: 'trade and economy'; 'politics and security'; 'capacity development and education'; and 'social, cultural, civil society, and people-to-people ties (cited in Kugiel, 2017). This study focused on the area issues for assessing India's soft power for strengthening relations with Afghanistan.

THE ROLE OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER IN AFGHANISTAN

Infrastructure Development in Education and Other Sectors

India handed out significantly to the education of Afghans because the education sector of the country lacks adequate 'infrastructure', trained educators, and

'gender equality.' It awarded Scholarships to 'tens of thousands of Afghan students.' Afghan Women and adolescents receive occupational 'training and skill development'. The renovation of Habibia High School in India is a $1 million endeavour. Through utilizing 'educational development', India has attempted to establish contacts with the ethnic groups of Afghanistan, particularly the Pashtun (Tandon, 2019). India is involved in the 'School Feeding Program' and contributed to the construction of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH). As per data from 2017, 3,500 Afghan officials receive annual training in India, where 15,000 Afghan students go to school (Prabhu, 2021).

In July 2020, India and Afghanistan inked five deals for the installation of 'educational infrastructure' in four Afghan regions – Farah, Nooristan, Kapisa, and Badakhshan – including the creation of 'classrooms', a complex for 'higher education', and a street on the Alberoni University campus (Hindustan Times, 2020). Since the end of 2001, one of the major international attempts to rebuild Afghanistan has come from India. The nation has given about $3 Billion to Afghanistan's infrastructure and 'institutional development', making it the greatest 'regional donor'. New Delhi provides Afghan nationals with around 600 Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) positions each year (Prabhu, 2021).

India spent $90 million to construct the new Afghan Parliament building, which Modi dedicated in 2015 as his nation's gift to Afghanistan's democracy. Modi refurbished the Stor Palace in Kabul, which once housed Afghan King Amanullah Khan in the 1920s. In 2016, he opened the Salma Dam, a massive infrastructural project in Heart's western outskirts that provides water to nearby neighbourhoods and irrigates thousands of acres of land. India is one of the main regional funders to Afghanistan, having invested over $3 billion in the infrastructure and 'building projects' to date.' In 2017, India's former ambassador to Afghanistan, V.P. Haran, stated that preventing Afghanistan from falling into the clutches of the Taliban or other forces sponsored by Pakistan has been a central focus of India's 'neighbourhood policy' toward the country (Trivedi, 2021).

In addition, India increased its 'development' cooperation with Afghanistan in September 2017 and promised numerous projects in 31 provinces, including drinking water supplies, affordable housing, highways, and 'polyclinics' (Roy, 2017). According to V Muraleedharan, Union Minister of State for External Affairs of India, India and Afghanistan have been working together on more than 500 projects in crucial regions spanning all 34 provinces of the nation (ANI, 2022). Moreover, one of India's important infrastructure projects in South-Western Afghanistan was the highway from Zaranj to Delaram, which was inaugurated by President Hamid Karzai and India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on 22nd January 2009 (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2016).

Development of Cricket

Cricket, inaugurated by the British in India, is an important tool that retains Indian identity around the world, though currently, the game is mainly practised in Commonwealth member nations. Most of the Indians staying outside of India assemble themselves on the occasion of a cricket match. The game, which is also popular in Pakistan, the closest neighbour of India, unites all sections of people and solidifies their national identities (Devan, 2012). Though Afghans also became known to cricket through the British, a mass circulation of the game

happened by Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Afghanistan after their return. Afghanistan established a Cricket board in 1995, while the national team of the state journeyed in 2001 (International Cricket Council, 2018).

India's one of the key methods of exerting its soft power has been participation in and commitment to the growth of cricket in Afghanistan. India arranged the Indo-Afghanistan amity series in 2018 in Bengaluru, India, a type of test cricket that is lengthier, more competitive, and prestigious, highlighting the remarkable qualities of the Afghan team. This series marked a turning point for Afghan cricket and enhanced relations between the countries. The Afghan players were greeted with amazing hospitality by India. In addition, India designated the 'Greater Noida Stadium' as the Afghan cricket team's formal training site, as Afghanistan lacks one. The Indian government also paid for the construction of a stadium in Kandahar and contributed 'coaching and technical' resources. India utilized the sport of cricket as a medium for 'nation-building' in Afghanistan and to deepen ties with that country (Tandon, 2019).

Bollywood Films

Indian Bollywood and Afghanistan have been close partners for a long time. This connection strengthens ties between individuals in ways that go beyond what can be accomplished by government action. Cultural ties between India and Afghanistan are highlighted in works like Rabindranath Tagore's Kabuliwa-la, which contribute to stronger relations between the two countries. Afghanistan has consistently shown a strong interest in Indian films. Furthermore, Afghans, especially Pashtuns, have traditionally been portrayed as 'good guys' in Bollywood. Numerous Bollywood films, including Dharmatma, Khuda Gawah, and Kabul Express have been filmed in Afghanistan, expanding the fame of Indian movies in the country. The films foster a sense of camaraderie among Afghans and inform them of their affinity with India. Ashraf Ghani, the former Afghan president, remarked that Bollywood has a greater influence than $1 billion on Afghanistan. This demonstrates the extent of Bollywood's soft power appeal by capturing the souls and minds of the Afghans (Tandon, 2019).

India Culture Centre

The India Cultural Centre was launched on September 14, 2007, at the Indian Embassy in Kabul, which has flourished cultural exchange between the two countries. Both the Afghan Embassy and Kabul University now offer courses in Hindustani vocal and instrumental classical music to local pupils. A professionally assigned, highly skilled musical instructor from India named Ustad Gulfam Ahmad teaches music. The Centre's music classes are offered at no cost to students. There are currently between 50 and 60 music students registered in the Centre and 35 music learners participating at Kabul University. The Centre's cultural programs have a significant impact on bridging the gap between the populations of the two nations (Embassy of India, Kabul, Afghanistan).

The India-Afghanistan Foundation (IAF)

The India-Afghanistan Foundation (IAF) was created in April 2007 as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Governments of India and Afghanistan. The primary aim of this trust fund was to strengthen the relations between the two countries by facilitating 'economic, scientific, educational, technical, and cultural' collaboration. Additionally, the IAF seeks to

promote mutual 'understanding' and goodwill among the populations of both nations. The Foundation aims to facilitate travels and interactions between the two countries, specifically targeting researchers, scholars, experts, and artists engaged in fields of activities encompassed by the organization. It facilitates educational events like colloquia, symposia, and workshops centred around topics of shared significance. The Foundation also provides financial assistance to NGOs operating in both countries, whose efforts contribute to the realization of the Foundation's goals (Embassy of India, Kabul, Afghanistan).

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Educational Cooperation

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an 'autonomous' organization as part of the legal authority of the Ministry of External Affairs of India provides an overall of 1,000 scholarships to Afghan students who want to study at Indian Universities at undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. levels. The Ministry of Higher Education is the designated entity responsible for overseeing the implementation of the scheme on behalf of Afghanistan (Embassy of India, Kabul, Afghanistan).

The Confederation of Indian Industries ran the India-Afghanistan Vocational Education Centre, which taught Afghan youngsters carpentry, plumbing, welding, masonry, and sewing. Additionally, the renowned Indian NGO Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) ran a women's technical education centre in Baghe-Zanana to educate Afghan 'war widows' and 'orphans' in garment manufacturing, nursery planting, food manufacturing, and advertising (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2016).

Health and Medical Care

After the Taliban government fell in 2001, Afghanistan's interim administration started a rehabilitation programme by sending out medical and paramedic teams and setting up camps for the fitting of prosthetic limbs for 'amputees' injured by 'landmines'. Since Afghanistan could serve as a land route to Central Asia, and India has everlasting hostile relations with Pakistan, India started re-establishing partaking in Afghanistan. In the area of healthcare, India and Afghanistan signed a deal in 2005 titled "Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Healthcare and Medical Sciences" under which they agreed to collaborate in eight areas: family welfare, public health and nutrition, communicable diseases, medical research, indigenous systems of medicine, medical equipment and pharmaceutical products, hospital management, nursing, and midwifery. The agreement also included exchanging medical and health knowledge and professionals in certain fields, mentoring in mutually agreed-upon areas, deputising specialists to participate in international gatherings held in either nation, organising academic conferences, and intellectual and operational meetings.

The availability of 'secondary and tertiary' level medical care in Afghanistan remains inadequate despite recent improvements. Therefore, numerous Afghans travel abroad for medical care, spending approximately $285 million a year (TOLO News, 2019). In March 2019, three of India's health groups inked partnerships with an Afghan health enterprise to expand excellent 'healthcare' in Afghanistan. The $6.5 million contracts intended to build a diagnostic clinic, dialysis centre, and pharmaceutical plant in Kabul (TOLO news, 2019). Howev-

er, western world sanctions on the current Taliban government deteriorated the situation more (The Guardian, 2021). India came to fill up the gap.

In recent times, India sent a "technical team" to its embassy in Kabul in June 2022, marking the reopening of Indian diplomatic missions in the city. Just after the Taliban took over in August of 2021, Indian diplomats evacuated the embassy out of fear for their safety. In response to the UN's urgent requests for assistance with the Afghan people and as part of its continuous humanitarian support, India, in August 2022, provided the Indira Gandhi Hospital in Kabul and the World Health Organization (WHO) with its tenth shipment of medical supplies containing 32 tons of health aid in 10 batches (Business Standard, 2022).

Moreover**,** for years, there are currently five Indian Medical Missions (IMMs) operating in Afghanistan. These missions are located in Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. Each month, they treat 30,000 patients and distribute medicines to those patients. Patients from neighbouring provinces frequently travel to one of the five IMMs to take advantage of the free medical consultations and medications that are offered there. Annually, there are around 360,000 patients who take advantage of these services (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2016).

Yoga

The Momtaz Yoga Centre was established in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2016, and its members are committed female yoginis. According to Momtaz, owner of the institution, women need healthy mental and physical well-being to nurture their offspring as the country has been suffering years of war. She further argues that establishing a peaceful society is not possible as long as one is not quiet with oneself. Yoga helps women overcome stress and consciousness of themselves. However, Yoga classes for women have been hampered by insecurity & the belief that yoga is contrary to Islam (Qazi, 2019). Taliban's take over the power of Afghanistan in 2021 further strengthened the possibility of Yoga's being hampered.

COMPARING TURKISH AND INDIAN SOFT POWER IN AFGHANISTAN

Both Türkiye and India hold historical vestiges playing key roles for their soft power in Afghanistan. Türkiye's soft power since the Taliban's fall in 2001was being pursued by its NATO alliance for rebuilding the war-torn Afghanistan. Besides Turkish state-owned institutions like Yunus Emre, Maarif Foundation, YTB, TIKA, Turkish Diyanet Foundation, AFAD, and Turkish Red Crescent have been acting as key soft power state actors in Afghanistan. On the other hand, India is not a NATO member and did not have any possibility to pursue what Türkiye pursued militarily. India utilized 'Neighbourhood First' policy to engage in the reconstruction efforts of Afghanistan which has been ravaged by war. This involvement is primarily driven by civil institutional participation facilitated through a bilateral strategic partnership. The Indian Embassy in Kabul, in collaboration with institutions such as the India Culture Centre, the India-Afghanistan Foundation (IAF), and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), plays a crucial role in coordinating these efforts.

The construction of infrastructure in the medical and education sectors by TIKA has significantly improved Türkiye's reputation in Afghanistan. The Afghan students who have been obtaining education in the educational institutions established by the TIKA are likely to be motivated to further their studies in Türkiye. On the other hand, India, being the largest democracy in the world, contributed to the construction of Afghanistan's national parliamentary edifice, thereby enhancing its enduring values. The parliament played a significant role in promoting democracy both implicitly and explicitly, as it served as a platform for the discussion and formulation of all national laws. Though the current Taliban government does not adhere to democratic ideals and rather relies on consultation within the Shura, which serves as the supreme authority for the enactment of statutes by the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, the building will remind India's contribution to the Afghanistan. Similar to Türkiye, India's involvement in infrastructure development for education and medical services has made significant contributions to the progress of the Afghan people. India's provision of aid for Cricket infrastructure, as compared to Türkiye, emerges as a more efficacious approach for garnering the support and admiration of Afghan youth.

Both India and Türkiye have been offering medical services to the Afghan population, although Indian medical services appear to be more extensive compared to that of Türkiye. The medical service sectors of both countries have achieved a global reputation. Based on the Global Health Security Index (2021), Türkiye was placed 46th out of 195 countries, whereas India occupied the 66th position. Consequently, the healthcare services in both nations have the potential to attract a significant number of individuals seeking treatment in Türkiye.

In addition, the Indian ICCR provides scholarships to around 1000 students from Afghanistan annually. The cultural proximity, eating habits, social traditions, language medium of education, and availability of future employment market are key factors that attract Afghan students to pursue their studies in India. On the other hand, the Turkish Maarif Foundation primarily offers educational services at the pre-primary to high school levels. Indeed, it has the potential to foster a sense of interest and attraction among students toward Turkish education and culture, motivating them to seek further education opportunities in Türkiye. Because the schooling years are crucial in cultivating a strong attachment to a specific culture and civilization. Aras and Mohammed (2019) argued that Türkiye expects that students who pursue their education in Türkiye will adopt the role of brand ambassadors for the country upon their return to their respective home countries. Taking into consideration Nye's examination of the correlation between 'Soft Power and public diplomacy' (Nye, 2008), it may be further posited that Türkiye has been employing scholarships for international students as a means of conducting public diplomacy. However, the number of Türkiye scholarships for higher education of Afghan students is much less than that of India. Consequently, Afghan pupils have a greater preference for India over Türkiye. According to Ozoglu et al. (2015), the presence of educational standards and the comparatively reasonable costs associated with education and living serve as key factors that entice international students to pursue their studies in Türkiye. Nonetheless, international students encounter a myriad of obstacles throughout their educational trajectory, spanning the processes of application and enrolment, as well as their social contacts within Türkiye. There exists a subset of

the teaching faculty who have insufficient knowledge and skills to adequately interact with international students hailing from varied cultural backgrounds.

Sports-dominant games – hold significant importance as key components of soft power. The significance of the growth of Afghan Cricket concerning India's soft power in Afghanistan is noteworthy, given that the sport has become highly popular in South Asia. Many South Asian migrants residing in Türkiye seek to establish and maintain their cultural identity through their engagement with the sport of cricket. One notable observation is that the game of Cricket, which holds significant popularity in India, also enjoys a considerable fan base in Afghanistan. In contrast, cricket does not enjoy widespread popularity in Türkiye, with the country mostly being acquainted with football, hence aligning it with European nations.

India's Bollywood contains universally shared values that appeal to Afghanistan like other countries in the world. On the other hand, Turkish films and TV serials, in comparison with India, are not so popular in Afghanistan. It has been only in the recent decade that Turkish mega TV serials have gained unprecedented popularity around the world. It opened the likelihood of competition between Indian and Turkish TV serials in Afghanistan. Indian Yoga has gained huge popularity not only in South Asia but also in many other countries in the world including Türkiye. However, Yoga has Hindu cultural and religious contours that can create mixed reactions among the majority Muslims in Afghanistan. Taliban's current strict Islamic rules have strengthened the possibility of confrontation with Yoga. On the contrary, Türkiye, as a majority Muslim populated country is in an advantageous position from that point as Turkish TV serials which are mostly watched in Afghanistan do not represent anti-Islamic tradition.

Both countries accommodate a democratic system that is recognized domestically and internationally. India, as the largest democracy in the world, sustained its democratic journey since its independence in 1947. The construction of the parliament building will work as an everlasting soft power of India in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Türkiye's steady democracy since 2002 also created a democratic value in Afghanistan though the current Taliban government kept the democratic system aside. As long as the Taliban exists in power, it is less likely that Türkiye or India's democratic values will work for their relationship with Afghanistan.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Though the absence of a border with Afghanistan gives Türkiye an extra advantage to retain its soft power, the current pushback of Afghan refugees by Türkiye (Human Rights Watch, 2022), has a huge likelihood of giving birth to anti-Türkiye sentiment among Afghans. It will ultimately exert a negative impact on Türkiye's soft power in Afghanistan. A complicated situation for more than 15,000 registered Afghan refugees in India (Shah, 2023), may also create anti-Indian sentiments among Afghans. Existing complex politics between India and Pakistan heavily impact India's relation with Afghanistan and consequently the soft power of India. For ideological reasons, the current Taliban government would not be able to be close or to keep trust in India as would be with Türkiye.

After the Taliban took over power in 2021, the country introduced a new name 'Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan.' It entirely relates the country to Islamic rules based on Sharia. So Taliban would not allow any exterior programs that contradict Islamic law. It may suffer the Afghan people under acute poverty and lower living standards. Taliban's stance on women's empowerment can be an important issue that contradicts the policies of Non-Government Organizations and International Non-Government Organizations that work for women's education and women's employment. Till now, the Turkish Maarif Foundation has been educating a considerable number of Afghan female students at the school level. However, the continuity of female education is largely dependent on the policies of the Taliban government. Though Türkiye has not recognized the Taliban government formally, its softened voice for working with the Taliban and the Taliban's offering of security management of the Kabul airport to Türkiye along with Qatar (TRT World, 2021), are important prospects for Türkiye's soft power in Afghanistan. In that case, Türkiye must work for Afghan people irrespective of religion and race.

On the other hand, India's shutdown of its embassy immediately after the Taliban's taking over the power signals India's uneasy relations with Afghanistan. Moreover, China's receptive stance on the Taliban is another concern for India because of the regional rivalry between India and China. India's neighbourhood policy which is considered the prime basis for its relations focused on protecting Afghans from the Taliban, which was not received well by the Taliban. Nevertheless, the Taliban's expressing of interest in working with India in later days has made hopes for the normalization of the relations between them. However, as the two countries have two different religious directions, India should be more cautious about its relations with Afghans irrespective of race and religion.

CONCLUSION

This study argues that Türkiye's non-offensive military role as part of NATO and many state and non-state actors' engagement in the post-9/11 incident played significant soft power roles. India did not militarily engage in Afghanistan but rather engaged through state and non-state actors for its relationship with Afghanistan, with some similarities and differences with Türkiye. However, the Taliban's coming to power in 2021 terminated Türkiye's military presence like other NATO states except for some Turkish armed forces' duty of managing Kabul airport, while India unofficially left Afghanistan immediately after the Taliban came to power. In later days, Türkiye was in a high comfort zone while dealing with the Taliban, unlike the upheaval of India's relationship with the Taliban. Turkish mediation of the peace talks between the Taliban and the USA seems to have played a significant role in getting a favourable outlook on the Turkish authority. On the other hand, India's close relationship with the pre-Taliban regimes and explicit anti-Taliban stance destabilized their relationship. Obstacles to operating India's smooth humanitarian assistance using the passage of Pakistan is another important issue for Indian soft powers to be resumed or not.

Türkiye launched branches of multiple institutions abroad to provide economic, educational, cultural, and humanitarian aid. Afghan students receiving scholarships from the Turkish government for education have been employing the roles of brand Ambassadors for Türkiye, similar to the Afghan students studying in

India under Fulbright scholarships. India's "Neighbourhood First" policy in the 1990s resulted in bilateral educational cooperation programs with neighbouring countries, which have been further expedited since 2002 by India's "scholarship diplomacy." This has been playing a significant role in strengthening the relationship between Türkiye and Afghanistan & India and Afghanistan.

Historical factors also worked as significant soft powers for Türkiye and India's relationship with Afghanistan. Türkiye has been able to build strong ties with Afghanistan since the 1920s despite not sharing a border. Afghanistan, a country with a large Muslim population, was among the first countries to recognize the Republic of Türkiye. Reform programs by Afghan King Amanullah Khan were fuelled by Turkish influence. All Afghans, regardless of ethnic background, supported Türkiye's non-offensive activities, even though Türkiye is a NATO member and took part in military operations in Afghanistan after the 9/11 incident. Historical causes also worked as soft powers while explaining India's relationship with Afghanistan.

Other than religious characteristics, it is not possible to distinguish between Afghanistan's and India's cultures. While recent Turkish TV serials appear to have eclipsed Indian ones in popularity, Bollywood films appealed more to Afghans than Türkiye did. Beyond the border, Bollywood is a non-state cultural institution. The Afghan people find great appeal in the Afghan culture, as shown in several Bollywood films.

Turkish state-owned organizations, namely Yunus Emre and the Turkish Diyanet Foundation, have their roots in the religious-cultural characteristics and share sentiments with the majority of the Afghan population. In contrast, India's state actor that serves as a cultural ambassador is the India Culture Centre in Kabul, which may draw religious reservations. Indeed, Indian TV serials that represent a different traditional religion than Turkish ones have been competing with Turkish TV serials on religious grounds. However, people in Afghanistan and India feel closer due to shared ethnic and cultural traits. Afghanistan is particularly drawn to the Indian sports of cricket and yoga despite certain religious objections to the latter. All these factors, which neither Türkiye nor India is forcing to carry out, have been playing significant roles in the two countries' relationship with Afghanistan, albeit differently in some cases.

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EXPLORING THE LEVELS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence have gained substantial attention as integral components of the intercultural adaptation process. Despite their significance, there exists a research gap in examining the specific levels of these competencies within homogeneous cohorts of international students. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to address this gap by assessing the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students enrolled in Chinese universities and their associated with sociodemographic variables. The study comprised 228 student participants. Participants completed self-report questionnaires measuring their cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of Asian international students exhibit moderate to high levels of both cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the research highlights a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Among sociodemographic variables, prior travel experiences and international students' friendships with local students displayed significant relationships with their cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. However, gender, age, and educational level were not significantly related to cultural and emotional intelligence competencies. The study might offer valuable insights into the extensive body of cross-cultural literature on international students and can also serve as a practical guide for university communities seeking to implement measures that enhance the cultural and emotional intelligence of international students.

Keywords: Cultural intelligence, Emotional intelligence, Demographics, Asian international students.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid surge in the globalization of the higher education system has led to a substantial rise in the number of students choosing to pursue their education abroad. Among the plethora of host countries available, the People's Republic of China has emerged as a particularly favored destination for a large cohort of international students from various corners of the globe (Hussain et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022). Upon their arrival in China, students find themselves navigating a significant intercultural transition within the new sociocultural and academic environment. In the sociocultural context, international students grapple with adapting to local customs, traditions, and ways of communication. This includes understanding and integrating into the local lifestyle, forming connections with Chinese peers, and navigating the cultural nuances that shape interpersonal relationships. In the academic setting, international students may encounter differences in teaching methodologies, assessment structures, and educational expectations (Liu et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2023). Adjusting to a new educational system involves not only understanding the coursework but also comprehending the cultural context within which learning takes place. Language barriers may add an extra layer of complexity, affecting both academic and social interactions (Hussain et al., 2023).

Intercultural experiences are influenced by a myriad of factors that can either facilitate or obstruct the process. Cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are believed to be among the psychological individual resources that have a positive contribution to students' psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Ayupitha et al., 2022). Cultural intelligence enables individuals to successfully adjust to the diversified cultural practices (Ang et al., 2006; Malay et al., 2023). Because cultural intelligence is believed to be a culture-free construct that upholds cultural adjustment and equips individual students to live and study with students of different cultures (Ng and Earley, 2006). Therefore, although international students require more time to adapt and adjust to the new environments, cultural intelligence matters and makes a difference in students' psychological and sociocultural adjustment endeavors to the new environment (Chu and Zhu, 2023). When international students emotionally, psychologically, and socio-culturally integrate with the host culture, they are more likely to experience less acculturative difficulties (Berry, 2005; Gebregergis et al., 2019; Sam and Berry, 2010). Likewise, emotional intelligence is an essential feature of psychological, and sociocultural adjustments (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Emotions are part of our lives and profoundly affect our interpersonal communications. Therefore, people need to know their emotions and those of others to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstanding, especially in a multicultural setting. For this reason, people with a high level of emotional intelligence have a more significant advantage in dealing with emotions in the intercultural transition. Several studies have also found that emotionally smart individuals are capable of effectively dealing with acculturative difficulties (Gebregergis et al., 2020; Schmitz and Schmitz, 2012; Vergara et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are critical aspects of international students' intercultural adaptation.

While acknowledging the considerable significance of cultural intelligence (Şenel, 2020) and emotional intelligence among international students, there is a noticeable dearth of empirical studies on these topics. Notably, despite the presumed

dominance of Asian international students in China (Dai et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023), research examining their levels of cultural and emotional intelligence, along with associations with demographic variables, is notably lacking. Additionally, there is a scarcity of literature addressing the correlation between these constructs within the context of this specific group in China. Recognizing this research gap and considering the broader relevance of these constructs in the international context, this study intended to examine the dynamics of cultural and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the significant interconnection between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the levels of cultural and emotional intelligence and elucidate the interrelationships between these dimensions. Additionally, the research aims to offer insights into the nature of the connection between cultural and emotional intelligence and the demographics of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section addresses two fundamental issues. Firstly, it presents the theoretical conceptualizations of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Secondly, it conducts a critical examination of empirical studies, focusing on the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among both general student populations and specifically international students. Additionally, it investigates potential relationships between these intelligences and various sociodemographic variables.

Cultural intelligence

The concept of cultural intelligence can encompass various definitions. One of the pioneering definitions of cultural intelligence originates from Early and Ang (2003). Cultural intelligence, a term initially coined by Earley and Ang (2003), refers to an individual's ability to effectively function and work across diverse cultures (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The theoretical foundation of the conceptual model of cultural intelligence draws upon the multidimensional perspective of intelligence proposed by (Sternberg and Detterman, 1986). Ang and Van Dyne (2008) further expanded on this multidimensional perspective, theorizing cultural intelligence to encompass metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions. The first dimension is *metacognitive*, which represents an individual's ability to cultivate a heightened awareness of cultural dynamics within diverse environments (Van Dyne et al., 2012). The second component is *cognitive* and it pertains to an individual's capacity to comprehend and assimilate information concerning diverse sociocultural practices (Ang et al., 2007). *Motivational* constitutes the third dimension and it refers to an individual's ability to channel attention and energy towards optimal performance in multicultural environments (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The final dimension of cultural intelligence is *behavioural*. It represents the final dimension of cultural intelligence and pertains to an individual's proficiency in demonstrating appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors during sociocultural interactions with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). This dimension holds particular significance as it empowers individuals to exert control and regulation over their social behaviours within a multicultural communication network, minimizing the potential for misunderstanding and attributional problems (Ghahremani et al., 2010).

Levels of Cultural intelligence and demographic variables

While there is a scarcity of scholarly literature examining the levels of cultural intelligence and its components among international students in China, particularly those originating from Asia, some studies have delved into the dynamics of cultural intelligence in intercultural contexts. One such study by Al-Jarrah and Alrabee (2020) explored the levels of cultural intelligence and adjustment among Syrian refugee students in Jordan. Their findings indicated that the students demonstrated moderate levels across all dimensions of cultural intelligence. Based on the ranking of students' scores across different dimensions, the study revealed that metacognitive cultural intelligence ranked highest, followed by motivational cultural intelligence, behavioural cultural intelligence, and finally cognitive cultural intelligence (Al-Jarrah and Alrabee, 2020). In terms of the relationship between gender and the various dimensions of cultural intelligence, the research revealed that males exhibited higher levels of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational cultural intelligence compared to their female counterparts. Even though this study makes a valuable scientific contribution to the existing literature, it is important to note a limitation in the form of a relatively small sample size ($N = 80$), potentially constraining its generalizability.

Further, a qualitative study carried out in Malaysia explored cultural intelligence skills of international post-graduate students pursuing their studies in the country (Idrus, 2021). The findings of this study indicated that the students encountered substantial challenges during their intercultural transition, suggesting a potential lack of proficiency in cultural intelligence (Idrus, 2021). Given that the study of Idrus (2021) adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach, its findings did not explicitly evaluate the quantified levels of cultural intelligence in the participants. In an interesting study, Chkhikvadze et al. (2019) examined the emotional and cultural intelligence levels of Asian international students studying in Russia, originating from China, Vietnam, Mongolia, and South Korea. The findings revealed that Vietnamese students exhibited the highest levels of cultural intelligence, excelling in its metacognitive, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Conversely, Mongolian students reported comparatively lower levels of metacognitive and behavioural dimensions, while students from South Korea demonstrated lower levels of motivational cultural intelligence.

Another study conducted among Turkish and international students in Türkiye highlighted that both groups reported moderate levels of perceived intercultural sensitivity and high levels of cultural intelligence (Abasli and Polat, 2019). The study also indicated that cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity levels showed no significant differences across various groups, including age, nationality, and educational levels. However, a statistically significant difference was observed between genders within the Turkish group, whereas no such difference was found among international students (Abasli and Polat, 2019). Likewise, carried out a cross-sectional study to examine the levels of cultural intelligence among Portuguese higher education students and their results revealed that the students showed higher levels of cultural intelligence except in one dimension which is cognitive cultural intelligence, in which the students reported lower levels. In a parallel recent study, Sousa et al. (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study to assess the levels of cultural intelligence among Portuguese higher education students. Their results indicated that, on the whole, students exhibited heightened cultural intelligence, except for one dimension—cognitive cultural intelligence,

where the reported levels were comparatively lower. Additionally, Şenel (2020) conducted a survey among Turkish university students to investigate whether variations in cultural intelligence levels exist based on demographics such as age, gender, departments, and year of study or grade level. The findings indicated a significant association between gender and department with the metacognitive dimension of cultural intelligence. Specifically, males and students from the department of French language education reported higher scores compared to their counterparts. However, there were no significant differences in cultural intelligence levels across years of study (grade level) and age groups (Şenel, 2020). It is important to highlight that as the study focused on local university students, the results may not apply to the context of international students.

In summary, the literature in this section indicates that the cultural intelligence of international students generally falls within the moderate to higher range. However, the relationship between cultural intelligence and demographics is varied and not fully established. Some demographic factors show significant associations with cultural intelligence, while others do not.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence encompasses various definitions, one of which highlights an individual's ability to recognize and understand their own emotions as well as those of others (Mayer et al., 2000). Based on the broader intelligence concept, Mayer and Salovey (1997) have proposed an emotional intelligence model as a distinct cognitive ability closely linked to general intelligence. This model encompasses four branches of emotional abilities: perception of emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). The first component is *perception of emotions*. It is a key component of emotional intelligence, involves the ability to discern specific emotional elements within oneself and others, as well as effectively communicate and discuss these emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). The second component is *enhancing cognitive processes*. This facet of emotional intelligence pertains to an individual's skill in harnessing emotional understanding to support cognitive functions such as thinking, problem-solving, memory, judgment, and decision-making – integral aspects for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships. The third component is *understanding emotions*. This aspect of emotional intelligence signifies an individual's capacity to comprehend that emotions unfold differently across cultures, understand how genuine feelings can impact future emotional states, differentiate between emotions and moods, identify emotional transitions, assess conditions that evoke emotions, and discern the antecedents and consequences of emotional responses (Mayer et al., 2016). The fourth and final component is *managing emotions*. The pinnacle of emotional intelligence lies in the ability to manage emotions effectively. This skill involves regulating one's own emotions and those of others.

Levels of Emotional intelligence and demographic variables

Numerous prior studies have investigated the levels of emotional intelligence within the broader higher education student community. For instance, Hamdzah et al. (2016) found that university students exhibited moderate levels of emotional intelligence. However, it was also observed that students displayed lower levels of emotional intelligence in specific components, notably in areas such as self-regulation and motivation. Similarly, Mohzan et al. (2013) employed a cross-sectional

approach with a sample of 171 undergraduate students in Malaysia to measure emotional intelligence and its four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotions appraisal, understanding emotions, and regulation of emotions. The results of this study revealed that the students exhibited a higher level of emotional intelligence along with positive outcomes across its four sub-components. A recent study conducted among nursing students in Saudi Arabia also found that a majority of the participants reported moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence (Almansour, 2023). Additionally, the study revealed a significant association between participants' levels of emotional intelligence and their demographics, including age, marital status, and years of study (Almansour, 2023). In a similar line of research, Kant (2019) examined the levels of emotional intelligence, utilizing a sample of 200 university students in India. Kant's findings corroborated the notion that a substantial majority of the student participants demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence. Even though these studies enhance our comprehension of emotional intelligence within the higher education setting, their scope is limited to domestic university students. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the experiences of international students.

More specifically, several studies have explored the emotional intelligence levels of international students. In a study carried out in Hungary, it was observed that international students exhibited moderate levels across various dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Valishin et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study indicated that the levels of emotional intelligence showed no significant associations with age and gender. However, a significant limitation of this research stems from its reliance on a small sample size, and caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings to the broader international student population. Furthermore, a study conducted in Russia among Asian international students revealed that Mongolian and Chinese students displayed higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to their Vietnamese and South Korean counterparts (Chkhikvadze et al., 2019). Another comparative analysis conducted in Singapore between undergraduate international and domestic university students revealed that international students exhibited higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to their domestic counterparts (Fatt and Howe, 2003). Among the various demographics investigated in this study, including gender, age, and level of study, gender emerged as a statistically significant factor influencing emotional intelligence. Notably, males appeared to demonstrate higher emotional intelligence compared to their female counterparts. In general, international students exhibit a range of emotional intelligence levels, with the majority falling within the moderate to high spectrum, although instances of lower levels exist in certain cases.

The synthesis of existing literature reveals that a considerable number of higher education students, both domestic and international, display moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence. Moreover, disparities in emotional intelligence levels are apparent across several demographic and cultural backgrounds, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in research on emotional intelligence among student populations.

The association between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

While cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence represent distinct psychological constructs, they also exhibit notable similarities. Unlike personality traits, which tend to remain relatively stable over time, both cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are conceptualized as constructs that can undergo change and development (Ang et al., 2006). While personality traits are typically stable across time, cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are considered more dynamic and subject to developmental shifts (Ang et al., 2006) This trait-like nature can serve as antecedents for state-like constructs, suggesting that emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence may influence each other reciprocally (Ang et al., 2006). Despite limited empirical studies exploring the relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence (Carvalho et al., 2020), existing research suggests certain specific facets of emotional intelligence may be correlated with particular dimensions of cultural intelligence. For example, Moon (2010) conducted confirmatory and regression analyses to investigate the connection between emotional intelligence and the four dimensions of cultural intelligence. The empirical findings indicate a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. However, it is crucial to recognize that emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence are distinctive psychological states (Moon, 2010). A study involving 230 international students in Indonesia also found a positive correlation between cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and most of their respective components (Putranto et al., 2018). It's worth noting, however, that the observed correlations were relatively weak. Overall, existing literature indicates a positive link between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Aim of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students studying in different Chinese universities. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the relationship between the levels of cultural and emotional intelligence and various sociodemographic variables among the students.

Research objectives

The current study had five objectives and the objectives are presented as follows.

1. To investigate the levels of cultural intelligence among Asian international students in China.

2. To determine whether students' cultural intelligence scores significantly differ across their demographics.

3. To examine the levels of emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China.

4. To ascertain whether students' emotional intelligence scores significantly differ across their demographics.

5. To explore the interplay between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China.

METHODS

Sample of the study

The participants of the study were Asian international students who were doing their undergraduate and postgraduate studies at several universities in Wuhan, the People's Republic of China. The decision to recruit Asian international students for this study stems from the fact that they represent the largest international students in China. Moreover, despite potential variations in their national cultures, there tends to be a degree of cultural similarity among students originating from the same continent. Consequently, examining the cultural and emotional intelligence of students with similar backgrounds may provide deeper insights compared to those from diverse continents. The study recruited a total of 228 international university students (119/52.2% males and 109/47.8% females) with an average age of 26.8 years. Concerning marital status, 64(28.1 %) of the participants were married, and the remaining 164 (71.9%) were unmarried. As per educational level, there were 55 (24.1%) – bachelor's, 103 (45.2%) – Master's, and 70 (30.7%) – doctorate students. Regarding prior travel experiences, while more than half of the participants reported that they had previous abroad experience ($n = 132$; 57.9%), several participants were found to have no prior travel experience before coming to China ($n = 95$; 41.1%). About their friendship with Chinese students, the majority of the student participants responded that they have Chinese friends ($n = 177$; 76.6%) and some participants reported that they were unable to make chinse friends ($n = 51$; 22.4%). The participants originated from 28 Asian countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia, and Cambodia.

Table 1. *Summary of demographic characteristics of the participants (N = 228)*

Variable	Sub-groups	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	119	52.20
	Female	109	47.80
Marital Status	Married	64	28.10
	Single	164	71.90
Prior Travel Experience	Yes	133	58.30
	No	95	41.70
Educational Level	Bachelor	55	24.10
	Master	103	45.20
	Doctoral	70	30.70
Chinese Friends	Yes	177	77.60
	No	51	22.40

Source: Authors' data

Measures

Sociodemographics. To gather information on sociodemographic variables, participants were queried to furnish details about their age, gender, continent

of origin, marital status, educational attainment, and friendship with Chinese students.

Cultural Intelligence. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al. (2007) was employed to measure the cultural intelligence of international student participants. CQS is a reliable 20-item multifaceted scale encompassing four subscales rates on seven Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). the four subscales of CQS are metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behaviour (Ang et al., 2007). Evidence for convergent validity was also provided (Ang et al., 2007; Moon, 2010). In the current study, the measure was also found to have a high overall reliability coefficient (α = .88).

Emotional Intelligence. The variable emotional intelligence was measured using the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test developed (SEIT) by Schutte et al. (1998). SEIT contains 33 items rated on five Likert-type scales ranging between 1 = (*Strongly Disagree*) and 5 = (*Strongly Agree*). The internal consistency of SEIT, as measured by Cronbach's alphas was found to be highly reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.90 (Schutte et al., 1998). Notwithstanding Schutte et al. (1998) initially developed SEIT as one solution factor, following factor analytic studies, however, suggested a four-factor solution for the 33 items (Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Petrides and Furnham, 2000; Saklofske et al., 2003). The four subscales of emotional intelligence are the perception of emotions, managing one's emotions, managing others' emotions, and utilization of emotions. The overall reliability was .84 (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). The measure also appeared to be highly reliable in the current study as well with a reliability coefficient of .90.

Data collection procedure and ethical consideration

Upon receiving approval from the School of Psychology, Central China Normal University, a self-report questionnaire was disseminated to participants in their respective classrooms, libraries, and dormitories. The administration, guidance, and facilitation of the data collection process were undertaken by senior Master's or Ph.D. students from Central China Normal University, along with the assistance of country mates and friends. This collaborative effort aimed to address any potential challenges participants might encounter in understanding the item statements. In adherence to the guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association, participation in the current study was entirely voluntary and contingent upon informed consent. Participants were explicitly informed that the gathered data would exclusively be used for research purposes and not for any other intent. Emphasis was placed on upholding individual safety, fostering respect, ensuring autonomy, maintaining data anonymity, and preserving confidentiality throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The initial dataset was entered into version 25 of SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences). Subsequently, various descriptive statistical techniques were employed for data analysis. Specifically, methods such as frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to provide a summary of the data. Additionally, Pearson's correlation was applied to investigate relationships between the study variables. To explore the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, as well as their respective sub-scales, the total continu-

ous scores for each variable were categorized into three groups of scores. The lower one-third of the total scores were designated as a lower level or below average, while middle scores indicated a moderate level. The upper one-third of the total scores denoted an above-average or a higher level of emotional intelligence.

RESULTS

Descriptive values of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of essential statistical measures, encompassing mean values, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, skewness, and kurtosis values for the variables under study. The reliability coefficients for all scales demonstrated robust internal consistency, exceeding the recommended threshold of .50 (Taber, 2018). To evaluate the normality assumption of the study variables, skewness and kurtosis values, indicative of distribution shape, were computed. Generally, values within the − 2 to +2 range for both skewness and kurtosis are considered acceptable for a normal univariate distribution (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2014) As evident in Table 2, all variables exhibited skewness and kurtosis values within this acceptable range, affirming the normal distribution of the data. Furthermore, descriptive analyses uncovered that student participants' cultural intelligence scores ranged from 33 to 140, while overall emotional intelligence scores spanned from 59 to 162.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics of the study variables (N = 228)*

Variables	Min	Max	M	SD	α	Items	Sk	Ku
Metacognitive	4.00	28.00	18.37	4.94	.82	4	-.31	-.04
Cognitive	6.00	42.00	25.95	6.74	.85	6	-.16	-.15
Motivational	8.00	35.00	26.02	5.44	.86	5	-.49	-.09
Behavioural	5.00	35.00	23.55	5.67	.86	5	-.21	.23
Total Cultural Intelligence	33.00	140.00	93.89	17.00	.90	20	-.03	.07
Perception of Emotions	20.00	50.00	35.58	4.84	.68	10	.07	1.06
Managing own Emotions	15.00	45.00	34.76	5.13	.78	9	-.66	.77
Managing Others' Emotions	13.00	40.00	29.96	4.72	.75	8	-.46	.21
Utilization of Emotions	9.00	30.00	23.06	3.64	.72	6	-.64	.65
Total Emotional Intelligence	59.00	162.00	123.36	15.87	.91	33	-.58	.85

Note: *Min* = Minimum; *Max* = Maximum; *Sk* = skewness; *Ku* = Kurtosis

Source: Authors' data

Levels of overall cultural intelligence

A frequency distribution analysis was conducted to investigate the levels of cultural intelligence and its constituent components. The results generally indicate that students demonstrated moderate to higher levels of overall cultural intelligence. Referring to Figure 1, it is evident that 51.80% (n = 118) of respondents reported average scores, while 47.80% (n = 109) scored above average on overall cultural intelligence. Only a small fraction, 0.40% of the sample, reported lower levels of overall cultural intelligence.

Figure 1. *Total Cultural Intelligence*
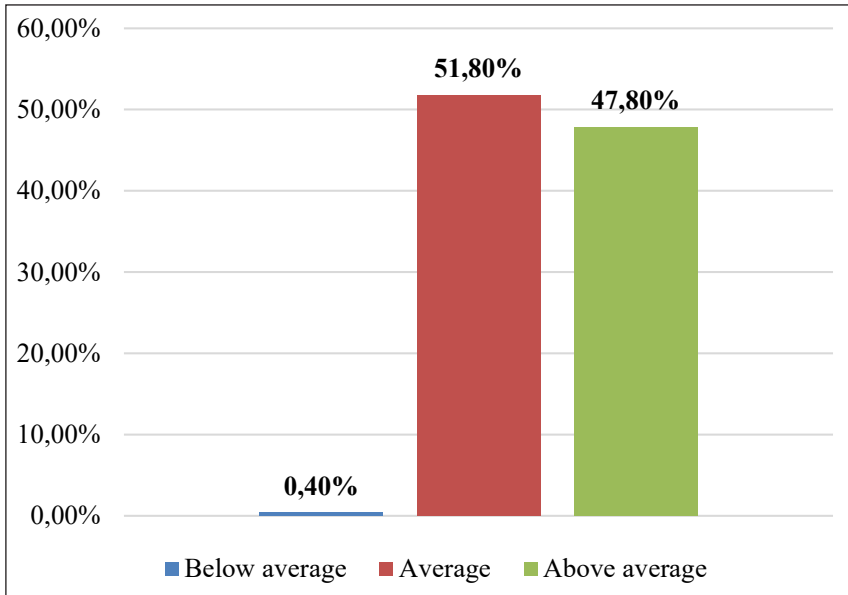
Source: Authors' data

Levels of components of cultural intelligence

In addition to assessing overall cultural intelligence, the study also examined individual components. Figure 2 illustrates the levels of the first component, metacognitive cultural intelligence. The results show that more than half of the students demonstrated higher levels (n = 126; 53.10%), while 42.10% (n = 96) and 4.80% (n = 11) reported moderate and lower levels, respectively. Moving on to Figure 3, the majority of students exhibited moderate (n = 135; 59.20%) and higher (n = 83; 36.40%) levels of cognitive cultural intelligence, the second component. Only a small proportion (n = 10; 4.10%) reported lower levels in this dimension. Figure 4 presents the levels of motivational cultural intelligence, the third component, indicating that around two-thirds of the sample had higher levels (n = 150; 65.30%). Moreover, 33.30% (n = 76) demonstrated moderate levels, and only 0.90% (n = 2) reported below-average scores. The final component, behavioural cultural intelligence, is depicted in Figure 5. Results revealed that 52.20% (n = 118) of participants scored average, while 44.56% (n = 101) scored above average. On the other hand, there were a few participants who scored lower in behavioural cultural intelligence (n = 8; 3.50%). Comparing

students' levels across the four dimensions, it is evident that they performed highest in motivational cultural intelligence, followed by metacognitive cultural intelligence.

Figure 2. *Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence*
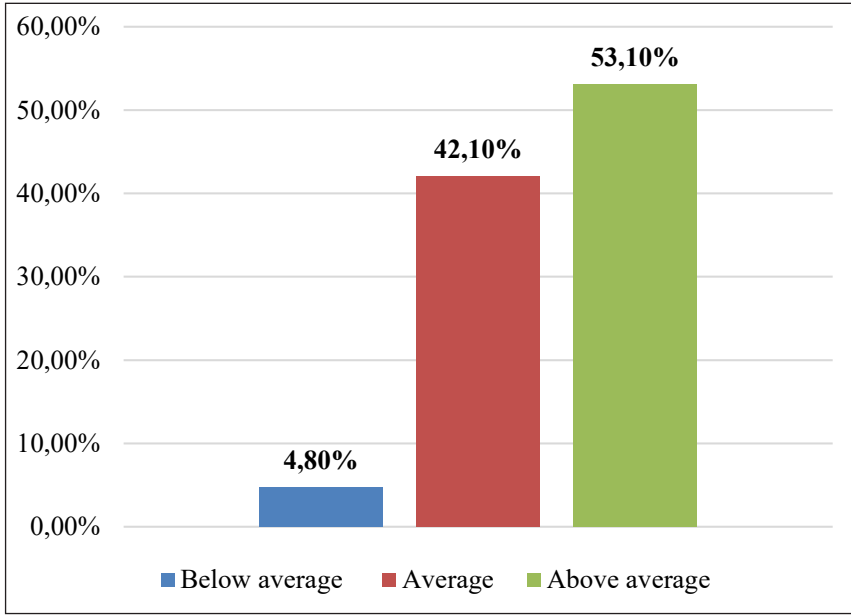
Source: Authors' data

Figure 3. *Cognitive Cultural Intelligence*
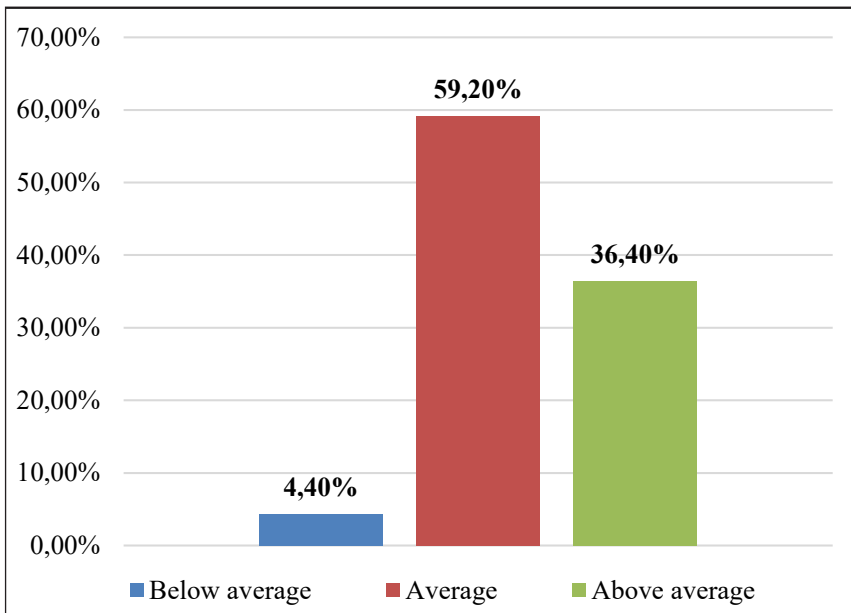
Source: Authors' data

Figure 4. *Motivational Cultural intelligence*
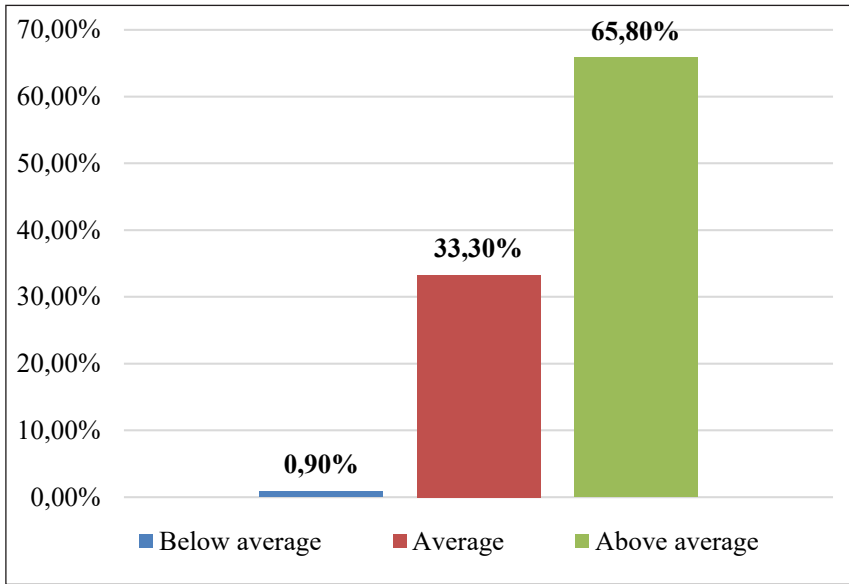
Source: Authors' data

Figure 5. *Behavioral Cultural Intelligence*
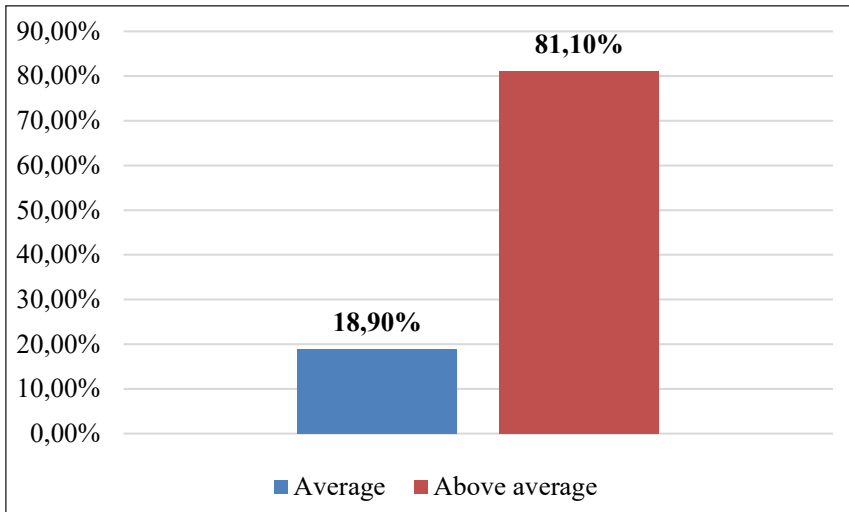
Source: Authors' data

Levels of cultural intelligence and demographics

Gender and marital status, age, and educational level

To assess the statistical significance of the relationships of participants' demographic variables of gender and marital status with their scores for cultural intelligence and its dimensions, an independent sample t-test was conducted. As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, the findings revealed no statistically significant

differences in the scores of all variables for gender and marital status sub-groups ($p > .05$). This suggests that both males and females as well as married and unmarried demonstrated similar levels of cultural intelligence. A Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine the association between age and cultural intelligence and the obtained result indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the variables ($p > .05$). Concerning the participants' educational levels, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine potential variations in cultural intelligence and its components among students with bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. The results revealed there were no statistically significant mean differences among the groups for the specified variables ($p > .05$).

Table 3. *Levels of cultural intelligence and gender*

Variables	Gender	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Metacognitive	Male	18.43	4.72	.178	.859
	Female	18.31	5.19		
Cognitive	Male	26.56	6.79	1.444	.150
	Female	25.28	6.67		
Motivational	Male	25.78	5.24	-.696	.487
	Female	26.28	5.67		
Behavioural	Male	23.41	5.54	-.379	.705
	Female	23.69	5.83		
Cultural Intelligence	Male	94.18	16.88	.273	.785
	Female	93.57	17.21		

Source: Authors' data

Table 4. *Levels of cultural intelligence and marital status*

Variables	Marital Status	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Metacognitive	Married	18.53	5.72	.302	.763
	Unmarried	18.31	4.61		
Cognitive	Married	25.23	7.19	-.997	.320
	Unmarried	26.22	6.56		
Motivational	Married	26.09	5.52	.124	.901
	Unmarried	25.99	5.42		
Behavioural	Married	23.90	5.78	.595	.552
	Unmarried	23.40	5.63		
Cultural Intelligence	Married	93.76	18.76	-.069	.945
	Unmarried	93.93	16.32		

Source: Authors' data

Prior travel experience

An independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate the potential impact of students' prior international travel experience on their cultural intelligence scores as well as its four dimensions. The summarized results in Table 5 reveal noteworthy findings. The data suggests that students with prior travel experience exhibited higher mean values ($M = 96.86$, $SD = 15.85$) in total cultural intelligence compared to those without prior travel experience ($M = 89.79$, $SD = 17.79$). This mean difference was proved to be statistically significant ($t = 3.18$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, students with prior travel experience demonstrated elevated scores in three dimensions of cultural intelligence (cognitive, motivational, and behavioural) when contrasted with their counterparts lacking travel experience. However, there was no statistically significant difference in metacognition scores between the two groups ($t = 1.26$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 5. *Level of cultural intelligence and prior international travel experience*

Variables	Prior experience	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Metacognitive	Yes	18.72	4.74	1.26	.207
	No	17.88	5.19		
Cognitive	Yes	26.88	6.73	2.50	.013
	No	24.64	6.58		
Motivational	Yes	26.99	4.91	3.25	.001
	No	24.66	5.87		
Behavioural	Yes	24.26	4.99	2.27	.024
	No	22.55	6.39		
Cultural Intelligence	Yes	96.86	15.83	3.18	.002
	No	89.74	17.79		

Source: Authors' data

Friendship with Chinese students

To examine the association between cultural intelligence levels and participants' friendships with Chinese students, we employed an independent t-test. Table 6 illustrates a statistically significant difference between students with Chinese friends and those without in overall cultural intelligence scores and its three components: metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural. The results suggest that students with Chinese friends exhibited higher cultural intelligence compared to their counterparts. However, no significant difference was observed in the cognitive dimension of cultural intelligence among the groups.

Table. 6. *Levels of cultural intelligence and participants' friendship with Chinese students*

Variables	Chinese friends	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Metacognitive	Yes	18.71	4.96	2.00	.048
	No	17.19	4.69		
Cognitive	Yes	26.40	6.80	1.90	.052
	No	24.37	6.36		
Motivational	Yes	26.63	5.23	3.22	.001
	No	23.90	5.65		
Behavioural	Yes	23.99	5.58	2.23	.026
	No	22.00	5.73		
Total Cultural Intelligence	Yes	95.74	16.51	3.12	.002
	No	87.47	17.25		

Source: Authors' data

Levels of emotional intelligence and its components

To assess the levels of emotional intelligence among the students, we computed a frequency distribution. As illustrated in Figure 6, the majority of international students exhibited above-average or higher levels on the overall emotional intelligence scale ($n = 185$; 81.1%). Conversely, a portion of students demonstrated average levels of emotional intelligence ($n = 43$; 18.90%).

Figure 6. *Total Emotional intelligence*
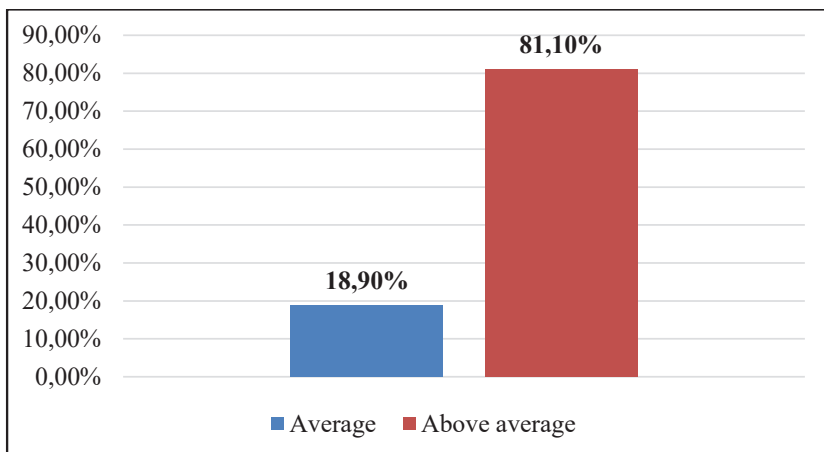
Source: Authors' data

Levels of components of emotional intelligence

Furthermore, we evaluated the students' emotional skills in specific components of emotional intelligence, revealing that most students attained levels ranging from average to higher. For instance, more than two-thirds of the participants (*n*

= 155; 68%) demonstrated higher levels of perception of emotion, while the remaining one-third (n = 73; 32%) exhibited moderate levels (see Figure 7). Similarly, in the assessment of managing own emotions, 72.80% of participants (n = 166) displayed higher levels, while 26.80% (n = 61) and 0.40% (n = 1) showed moderate and lower levels, respectively (see Figure 8). Examining the component of managing emotions of others (see Figure 9), 172 students (75.40%) reported higher levels, 55 (24.10%) reported moderate levels, and only one student (0.40%) reported lower levels of emotional skill. Likewise, Figure 10 indicates that over three-fourths of students scored above average or higher in the utilization of emotions (n = 173; 75.90%). In contrast, approximately one-fourth achieved moderate levels (n = 54; 23.70%). Among the four components of emotional intelligence, students scored highest in the utilization of emotions, followed by managing the emotions of others.

Figure 7. *Perception of emotions*
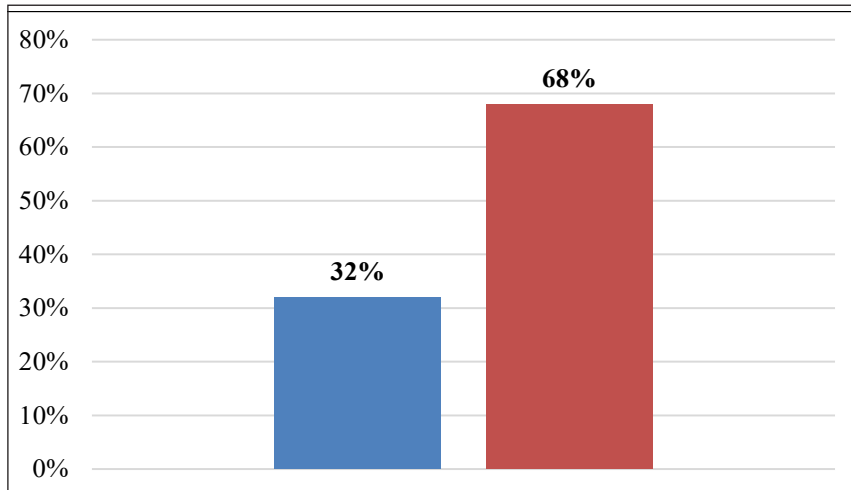
Source: Authors' data

Figure 8. *Managing Own Emotion*
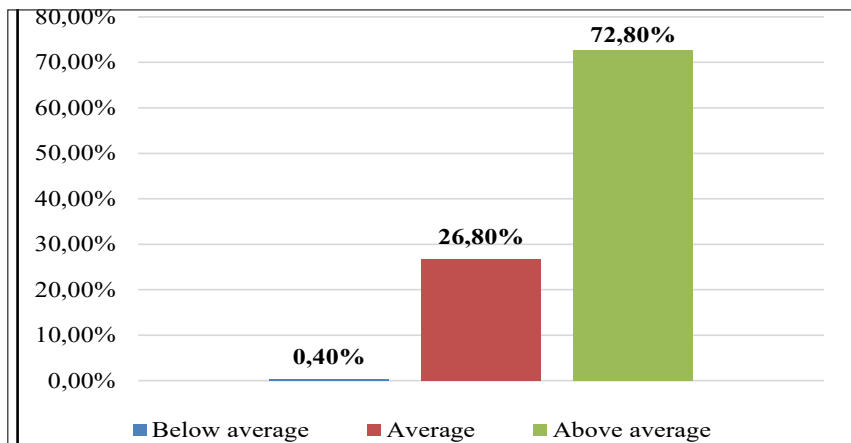
Source: Authors' data

Figure. 9. *Managing Others' emotions*
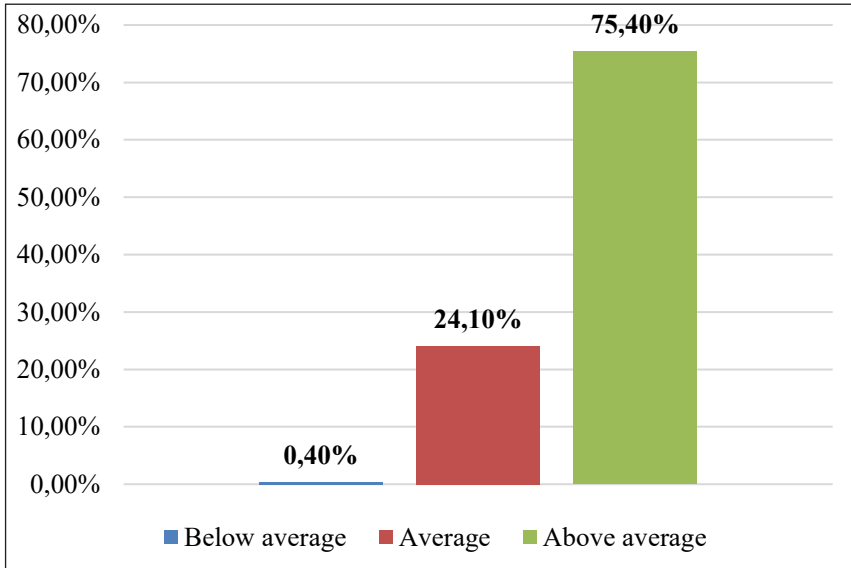
Source: Authors' data

Figure 10. *Utilization of emotions*
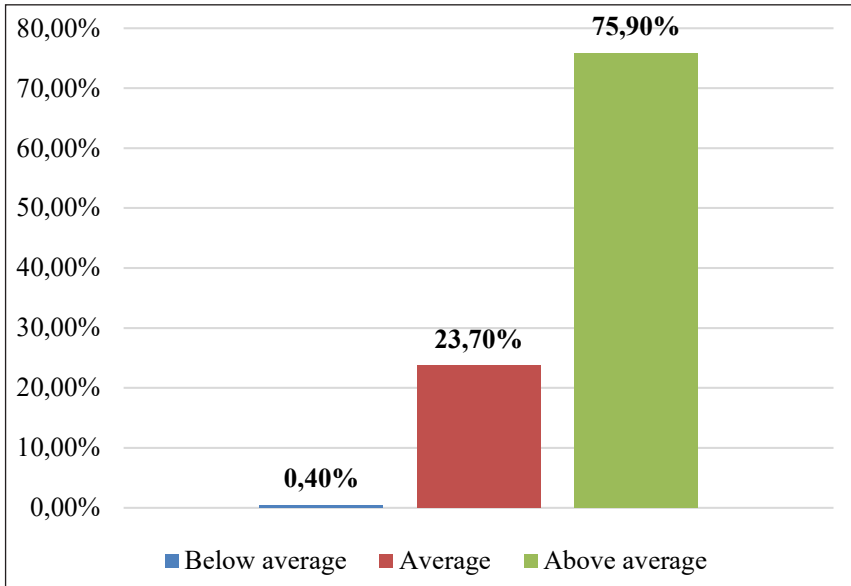
Source: Authors' data

Emotional intelligence and demographic variables

Gender and marital status, age, and educational level

To evaluate the statistical significance of associations between participants' demographic variables, such as gender and marital status, and their scores on emotional intelligence and its dimensions, an independent sample t-test was employed. As presented in Table 7 and Table 8, the results indicated no statistically significant differences in the scores across all variables for gender and marital status sub-groups ($p > .05$), except managing own emotions for marital status. In this specific dimension, married participants demonstrated superior skills in managing their emotions compared to their unmarried counterparts. This generally implies that individuals, regardless of gender or marital status, exhibited comparable levels of emotional intelligence. A Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to investigate the relationship between age and emotional intelligence and its four dimensions and the findings revealed no statistically significant correlation ($p > .05$). Regarding participants' educational levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore potential differences in emotional intelligence and its components among individuals with bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. The results showed no statistically significant mean variations among the groups for all the variables ($p > .05$).

Table 7. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and gender*

Variables	Gender	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Perception of Emotions	Male	35.68	5.16	.316	.752
	Female	35.47	4.48		
Managing Own Emotions	Male	34.82	5.12	.199	.843
	Female	34.68	5.15		
Managing Others' Emotions	Male	29.99	4.90	.144	.886
	Female	29.90	4.54		
Utilization of Emotions	Male	23.02	3.92	-.165	.869
	Female	23.10	3.32		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Male	123.52	16.78	.166	.869
	Female	123.17	14.88		

Source: Authors' data

Table 8. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and marital status*

Variables	Marital status	M	SD	t-value	p-value
Perception of Emotions	Married	35.65	4.59	.142	.887
	Unmarried	35.55	4.94		
Managing own Emotions	Married	35.59	4.83	1.541	.125
	Unmarried	34.43	5.21		
Managing Others' Emotions	Married	30.81	4.33	1.719	.087
	Unmarried	29.62	4.83		
Utilization of Emotions	Married	23.93	3.26	2.294	.016
	Unmarried	22.71	3.73		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Married	126.00	14.72	1.576	.116
	Unmarried	122.32	16.22		

Source: Authors' data

Prior travel experience

To investigate the correlation between students' prior international travel experiences and their emotional intelligence scores, including its four dimensions, an independent sample t-test was employed. The findings, as detailed in Table 9, revealed that students with prior travel experience exhibited significantly higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to those without such experiences ($t = 2.35, p < 0.05$). Additionally, students with previous travel exposure displayed notably greater scores in the perception of emotions ($t = 2.41, p < 0.05$)., managing own emotions ($t = 2.38, p < 0.05$)., and managing others' emotions ($t = 2.02, p < 0.05$). However, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the utilization of emotions between the two groups ($t = 1.07, p > 0.05$).

Table 9. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and prior travel experience*

Variables	Prior travel experience	M	SD	t-value	p-value
Perception of Emotions	Yes	36.12	4.92	2.02	.042
	No	34.82	4.64		
Managing own Emotions	Yes	35.43	5.14	2.38	.017
	No	33.81	4.97		
Managing Others' Emotions	Yes	30.58	4.75	2.41	.016
	No	29.07	4.56		
Utilization of Emotions	Yes	23.27	3.71	1.07	.284
	No	22.75	3.53		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Yes	125.42	16.18	2.35	.018
	No	120.45	15.03		

Source: Authors' data

Friendship with Chinese friends

To investigate the link between emotional intelligence levels and participants' friendships with Chinese students, we utilized an independent t-test. Intriguingly, the outcomes, as depicted in Table 4, demonstrated a statistically significant difference between participants with Chinese friends and those without in both overall emotional intelligence scores ($t = 3.17$, $p < 0.05$)., and its four components: perception of emotions ($t = 3.03$, $p < 0.05$), managing own emotions ($t = 2.86$, $p < 0.05$), managing others' emotions ($t = 2.41$, $p < 0.05$), and utilization of emotions ($t = 2.56$, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that participants with Chinese friends exhibited a higher degree of emotional intelligence compared to those without such social connections.

Table 10. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and friendship with locals*

Variables	Chinese friends	*M*	*SD*	*t-value*	*p-value*
Perception of Emotions	Yes	36.09	4.72	3.03	.003
	No	33.80	4.86		
Managing own Emotions	Yes	35.27	4.79	2.86	.005
	No	32.98	5.86		
Managing Others' Emotions	Yes	30.35	4.50	2.41	.017
	No	28.56	5.21		
Utilization of Emotions	Yes	23.38	3.60	2.56	.011
	No	21.92	3.57		
Emotional Intelligence	Yes	125.11	14.91	3.17	.002
	No	117.27	17.66		

Source: Authors' data

The relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

The study employed Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to examine the relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, including their respective sub-components. Preliminary analysis ensured that the assumption of normality was not violated (refer to Table 11). The correlation analyses revealed that the overall scores of cultural intelligence among international students were positively and significantly associated with their scores in emotional intelligence ($r = .53$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, students' cultural intelligence demonstrated positive correlations with the four sub-components of emotional intelligence: perception of emotions ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), managing own emotions ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), managing emotions of others ($r = .53$, $p < .001$), and utilization of emotions ($r = .32$, $p < .001$). Conversely, emotional intelligence exhibited statistically significant relationships with the four components of cultural intelligence: metacognitive ($r = .24$, $p < .001$), cognitive ($r = .38$, $p < .001$), motivational ($r = .56$, $p < .001$), and behavioural ($r = .39$, $p < .001$). Importantly, all correlations between the components of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence were positive and statistically significant. Detailed values are provided in Table 2.

Table 11. *Bivariate relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Meta									
2. Cog	.28**								
3. Moti	.36**	.50**							
4. Beh	.33**	.39**	.56**						
5. CI	.63**	.77**	.81**	.76**					
6. POE	.16*	.44**	.49**	.29**	.47**				
7. MOE	.21**	.32**	.52**	.36**	.47**	.64**			
8. MEO	.25**	.38**	.54**	.42**	.53**	.65**	.79**		
9. UOE	.19**	.14*	.34**	.29**	.32**	.55**	.67**	.65**	
10. EI	.24**	.38**	.56**	.39**	.53**	.83**	.91**	.90**	.81**

Note. *p* < 0.05. ** *p* < 0.01. Meta = Metacognitive; Cog = Cognitive; Moti = Motivational; Beh = Behavioural; CI = Cultural Intelligence; POE = Perception of Emotions; MOE = Managing Own Emotions; MEO = Managing Emotions of Other; UOE = Utilization of Emotions; EI = Emotional intelligence

Source: Authors' data

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of our research was to explore the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students studying in China, examining how these abilities relate to various sociodemographic variables. Specifically, the study had five guiding objectives. Our first objective was to thoroughly investigate the degree of cultural intelligence and its different dimensions among Asian international students enrolled in Chinese universities. The results revealed a noteworthy trend, indicating that a significant portion of the students exhibited moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence during their intercultural interactions. This suggests a commendable ability to adapt to the new intercultural environment. Specifically, the students demonstrated a robust set of skills, including substantial cultural awareness, a deep understanding of different cultures, comprehensive cultural knowledge, intrinsic motivation, and notable intercultural competence. These findings underline the students' capacity not only to navigate diverse cultural contexts but also to engage effectively with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. Our research findings are in accordance with prior studies, indicating a convergence in the observed levels of cultural intelligence. These studies consistently report that both domestic and international students exhibit moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence (e.g., Al-Jarrah, 2016; Al-Jarrah and Alrabee, 2020; Chkhikvadze et al., 2019; Sousa et al., 2023).

Asian international students demonstrated moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence, and this can be attributed to several potential explanations. First and foremost, their origin from Asian countries, likely played a role, as the cultural

similarities between their home cultures and Chinese culture may have positively influenced their cultural intelligence. For instance, a shared characteristic among Asian international students and Chinese culture is their collective cultural orientation. Additionally, some researchers contend that cultural distance stands out as a noteworthy factor influencing international students' capacity to adapt effectively within diverse cultural contexts (Fedotova, 2023; Malay et al., 2023). Additionally, a significant portion of the students reported having prior travel experiences before coming to China. This prior cultural exposure is thought to have significantly contributed to the development of their cultural intelligence. Furthermore, Chinese universities are widely recognized for their commitment to intercultural exchange programs integrated into co-curricular activities. This institutional emphasis on cross-cultural interactions within the university setting likely played a substantial role in enhancing the proficiency of international students in navigating diverse cultural contexts.

Our research's second objective was to explore the connections between students' cultural intelligence levels and various sociodemographic factors, including gender, marital status, age, educational level, prior travel experience, and friendships with local students. The study results indicate that gender, educational level, and age do not exhibit significant correlations with students' cultural intelligence. These findings are parallel to several previous researches, echoing the consensus that demographic variables, such as those considered, have minimal impact on cultural intelligence (e.g., Abasli and Polat, 2019; Şenel, 2020). However, it's worth noting that some studies have reported statistically significant associations between gender and cultural intelligence, suggesting potential differences favoring males in effective intercultural functioning. These variations may be influenced by methodological limitations in studies, such as small sample sizes and data analytical techniques, and should be considered cautiously. Moreover, our study underscores the importance of prior travel experience and friendships with local students in enhancing international students' cultural intelligence. The findings highlight that international students can derive substantial benefits from previous exposure and positive interpersonal relationships with local students, facilitating a more effective adaptation to the host environment. This supports a body of research consistently demonstrating that international students with prior international travel experiences and positive intergroup contact, such as friendships with local students, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of cultural intelligence and enhanced intercultural functioning (Crowne, 2013; Gebregergis et al., 2019; McKay et al., 2022; Sousa et al., 2019).

In its subsequent objective, the current study assessed the levels of emotional intelligence. The findings indicate that the emotional intelligence levels and sub-dimensions of the students range from average to high. Overall, the results suggest that the majority of Asian international students exhibit emotional intelligence in their intercultural interactions within the host society. Specifically, these students demonstrate high levels of sensitivity and perceptiveness to culturally specific emotional expressions, both in themselves and others. This heightened awareness enables them to make necessary adjustments and effectively adapt their emotional frameworks, thereby fostering more meaningful and successful communication with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the students display an ability to recognize challenges by assessing

how their current emotional states contribute to and influence cognitive processes. Additionally, they exhibit a comprehensive understanding of the nature of emotions and their connection to thoughts and actions, empowering them to navigate emotional and cognitive challenges within the intercultural communication network. The study further highlights the students' capacity to learn and exert control over both personal and others' emotions in a multicultural context. The results broadly support previous research on emotional intelligence levels in both domestic and international students, as evidenced by works such as those by Almansour (2023), Chkhikvadze et al. (2019), and Valishin et al. (2022).

A potential explanation for the moderate to higher levels of emotional intelligence observed in the students could be attributed to the collective cultural orientation of Asian societies. In collective cultures like those in Asia, individuals are encouraged to control their emotions and live in harmony with others, possibly contributing to their enhanced emotional intelligence. Similarly, within societies with collectivist cultures, the use of an indirect, high-context communication style and an emphasis on subtle cues may have facilitated the Asian international students' better understanding of subtle emotional cues in themselves and others. In their comparative examination of university students from individualist (Australia) and collectivist (India) cultures, Bhullar et al. (2012) confirmed that a collectivistic cultural orientation is linked to increased emotional intelligence and enhanced mental health outcomes. An alternative explanation for the observed outcomes of our study could be attributed to the dynamic nature of students' emotional intelligence, considered as a state-like ability. It is conceivable that daily intercultural experiences have played a role in altering and enhancing the students' emotional intelligence levels. The argument posits that engaging in intercultural communication and interacting with individuals from diverse cultures may contribute to a noticeable increase in the emotional intelligence of international students (Cho and Ulwiyyah, 2020). Furthermore, factors such as prior travel experience and social connections with local people, similar to cultural intelligence, may also contribute to explaining the moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence among the participants.

In the fourth objective of the study, we examined the correlation between students' demographic variables and their levels of emotional intelligence. The overall findings indicate that factors such as age, gender, and educational level did not exert a significant influence on emotional intelligence. Our study produced results that corroborate the results of several prior investigations (e.g., Fatt and Howe, 2003; Kaur et al., 2023; Valishin et al., 2022). It is noteworthy, however, that existing literature on the exploration of demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, and educational level in relation to emotional intelligence has yielded mixed and inconsistent results. This inconsistency may be attributed to methodological limitations and variations in theoretical conceptualizations of emotional intelligence. Additionally, while most studies on sociodemographic factors among international students primarily focus on variables such as gender, age, and year of study, our research underscores the importance of considering other significant factors. Specifically, prior travel experiences and establishing friendships with domestic students, often overlooked in various international students' investigations, should be recognized. The present study further supports the proposition that prior travel experience and friendships with Chinese students correlate with emotional intelligence. This suggests

that international students with previous travel exposure and those who have Chinese friends demonstrate higher emotional intelligence compared to their counterparts without such experiences. Crowne (2013) argues that gaining cultural exposure through international experiences enhances emotional learning, ultimately raising levels of emotional intelligence. It is plausible to assert that international exposure and establishing friendships with local students can significantly contribute to the development of a broad spectrum of socioemotional skills for international students. These skills encompass emotional management, cultural empathy, interpersonal communication skills, and open-mindedness. Likewise, engaging in international exposure and forming friendships with domestic students can enhance international students' capacity to effectively navigate the emotional challenges that may arise during intercultural interactions.

In the final analysis, this study examined the connections between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, encompassing their respective sub-dimensions. The findings reveal a correlation indicating that international students exhibiting higher levels of cultural intelligence also demonstrated higher emotional intelligence. Even though there is limited research on this subject, some existing body of literature highlights a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence (e.g., Carvalho et al., 2020; Moon, 2010; Putranto et al., 2018). The positive correlation between the constructs can be explained within the context of their theoretical conceptualizations. Although cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Earley and Ang, 2003), they are also similar and interrelated (Moon, 2010). Cultural intelligence, which involves the ability to adapt and navigate effectively in diverse cultural contexts, enhances the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. On the other hand, individuals who excel in recognizing and managing emotions of others are often better equipped to navigate the complexities of diverse cultural interactions (Moon, 2010). According to Ang et al. (2007), individuals with high cultural intelligence must possess a clear understanding of both their thought processes and those of others. This necessitates a significant emphasis on the perception of emotion, a crucial component of emotional intelligence. Moon (2010) further contends that certain aspects of emotional intelligence, such as social awareness and relationship management, may be closely intertwined with cultural intelligence, as these skills prove valuable in intercultural interaction and communication. Components of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness and self-management may be less likely to be applied in an intercultural context (Moon, 2010). However, our study contradicts this assumption, revealing that all components of emotional intelligence, including the management of one's emotions, exhibit positive associations with all dimensions of cultural intelligence. In our study, participants were international students from Asia studying in China. The observed statistically significant relationships between all subcomponents of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence may be influenced by the cultural similarity between the participants' background culture and that of China. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence functions effectively within a culturally similar context, supporting the idea that a shared cultural context enhances the relationship between emotional and cultural intelligence.

Implications and limitations

The present study is expected to have significant implications both in terms of theory and practical applications. From a theoretical perspective, exploring the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, and their interplay with demographic variables contributes valuable insights to the extensive body of cross-cultural literature related to international students. By examining these dimensions, the study enriches our understanding of how well individuals navigate and interact within diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, this research offers insight into the intricate dynamics of the relationships between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, unraveling the nuanced interconnections between their respective sub-components. In addition, the results of the current that prior travel experience and friendship with local students can also inform host universities to understand the importance of those factors in fostering the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Practically, the empirical knowledge and insights derived from this study can serve as a practical guide for university communities aiming to implement measures that enhance the cultural and emotional intelligence of international students. This, in turn, facilitates their smooth intercultural adaptation to the new sociocultural and academic environments. Given the adaptable and dynamic nature of cultural and emotional intelligence, universities can employ various programs and activities, such as orientations, cultural exchanges, festivals, seminars, and workshops, to bolster these capacities (Kővári and Raffay-Danyi, 2022). It is recommended that universities organize excursions, engaging international students in different communal activities within the host society. This exposure helps them establish social connections with members of the host community, crucial for the development of cultural and emotional intelligence (Crowne, 2013; McKay et al., 2022). Additionally, host universities should strive to create multicultural and inclusive campuses where diverse cultural and emotional perspectives are not only acknowledged but also valued. To further support international students in developing cultural and emotional competencies, universities could integrate teachings on cultural and emotional intelligence into their curricula. Moreover, instructors working with international students should be mindful of varying levels of emotional and cultural intelligence, adopting teaching methods that accommodate diverse student backgrounds and enhance all aspects of cultural and emotional skills.

Despite the study's theoretical and practical contributions, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations for future considerations. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small and confined to a specific group of students from the same continent, limiting the generalization of the findings to the broader international student population. Consequently, future researchers must replicate the study with a larger and more diverse sample. Another limitation is the use of a cross-sectional research approach, despite the malleable and state-like nature of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, which can develop over time. To address this, future research efforts may benefit from adopting a longitudinal approach to examine how these variables evolve. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-report instruments for assessing cultural and emotional intelligence introduces the potential influence of participants' social desirability bias on the results. This impact should be considered in future research endeavors, prompt-

ing the exploration of alternative or supplementary assessment methods for a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

Previous research has predominantly concentrated on investigating the factors influencing the intercultural adaptation of international students, particularly in prominent study-abroad destinations such as China. Among these factors, cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence have received considerable attention as crucial contributors to the intercultural adaptation process. However, limited studies have examined the specific levels of cultural and emotional intelligence among homogenous cohorts of international students. Acknowledging this research gap, the current study aims to evaluate the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China. Furthermore, it sought to explore potential variations in these levels across various sociodemographic variables of the students. The study's findings reveal that the students exhibit moderate to high levels of both cultural and emotional intelligence. Moreover, the research highlights a positive interrelation between students' levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of prior travel experiences and forming connections with local students as crucial factors in cultivating cultural and emotional competencies. These findings might contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in the intercultural adaptation of Asian international students in China and provide valuable insights for academic institutions and policymakers aiming to enhance the overall intercultural experiences of international students.

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EVALUATION OF RISK FACTORS CAUSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY BY FULL CONSISTENCY METHOD

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ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is the consequence of complex and comprehensive interactions with multiple risk factors. The experimental research highlighted that the public authorities have conducted tremendous efforts to determine juveniles at risk of delinquency and the factors related to delinquency, as well. Nevertheless, the basic research gap is to investigate which risk factor is more significant than others for allocating the limited resources and efforts. To close this gap, in this study, the Full Consistency Method (FUCOM) was utilized to determine the significance degrees of factors that cause juvenile delinquency. The findings indicate that the most significant risk factors causing juvenile delinquency are out and away "Family" and "Economic and Social Factors Relevant factors are of vital importance in determining both the social aspects and broader perspective on juvenile delinquency. In the planning phase of strategies to be developed for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, it is defined, which risk factor may be focused on to what extent, and which risk factor should be allocated more resources and effort to prevent juvenile delinquency more effectively. Besides, it has been concluded that the FUCOM method can be utilized effectively for juvenile delinquency decision-making analysis.

Keywords: Crime, Adolescent, Juvenile delinquency, Multi Criteria Decision Making, FUCOM

INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a broad term identifying behaviors that range from engaging in status offenses (e.g. running away from home, school truancy, and addiction to drugs/alcohol) to violent and criminal deeds (e.g. breaking and entering, burglary, assault, and use/distribution of illegal substances) (Montgomery and Barczyk, 2011).

The issue of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated, and the capacities of the prevention programmes are reported as either inadequate for coping with the current realities or don't exist. Many developing countries have also reported doing little or nothing to cope with this issue. Developed countries are focused on programmes that propose the prevention of juvenile delinquency, but the overall effect of them is relatively inadequate since the systems in effect are generally insufficient to identify the existing problem (World Youth Report, 2003: 190).

Juvenile delinquency affects not just the individual's personal structure, but also his or her social life and even the general society (Marshall and Enzmann, 2012). Minimizing the negative impacts caused by juvenile delinquency is vital for the futures of countries. Although many youths violate norms and break laws, substantially fewer engage in more serious transgressions that lead to processing and sanction by juvenile courts. For this reason, it is unsatisfactory to take into account just legal aspects; besides, it is compulsory to consider all the individual, social, and environmental factors causing juvenile delinquency (Lai et al., 2015).

Individual factors may cover depression (Chung et al., 2020), personal habits, attitudes, motivations (Pyle et al., 2015), mental illness (Snehil and Sagar, 2020), adolescents' hyperactivity (Falk et al., 2017), antisocial beliefs (Antunes and Eileen, 2017), low self-control (Holt et al., 2012), and addiction (drugs, alcohol, etc.) (Racz et al., 2016; Ramer and Colder, 2022).

Social factors can be considered as a combination of all potential criminal influences arising from the social environment such as family (Moitra et al., 2018), peers (Thomas, 2015), and school (Laeeque et al., 2022).

Environmental factors include any situations and possibilities that may promote or stimulate criminal behaviour (i.e., vulnerable victims, unprotected properties, disadvantages of neighbourhoods) (Martins et al., 2018; Azeredo et al., 2019; Joo and Chung, 2019).

In the case of juvenile delinquency, it is a generally agreed fact that no single theory or factor can cover the complexity of the field in which factors operate cumulatively and interactively (Yun et al., 2016; Jolliffe et al., 2017).

Besides, studies have also been published that focused on a single effect/cause of juvenile delinquency such as: single-parent households (Reeta and Singh, 2020), gender (Chapple et al., 2005; Choi, 2022), age (Sweeten et al., 2013), academic achievement levels (Lee, 2013), exclusion (Duran-Bonavila et al., 2017), peer influence (Thomas, 2015), physical/emotional abuse (van Berkel et al., 2018), cyber delinquency (Nam, 2021), low income (Joo and Chung, 2019), and relationships with teachers (Gao et al., 2022).

It is a common fact that juveniles who exhibit criminal behaviour are more likely to continue similar behaviours in adulthood. If the risk factors that lead adolescents to delinquency are identified along with their significance degrees, the risk of juvenile delinquency may be determined before they commit crimes, and delinquency may be prevented at an early stage with appropriate preventive improvement programs. However, considering that criminal behaviour is influenced by multiple factors and conditions rather than a single risk factor, early warning systems and diagnostic tools are needed to assess multiple risk factors in concert. Thus, juveniles at risk may be identified before criminal behaviour manifests by considering predefined risk factors (Ucuz et al., 2020).

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that delinquency is a potential threat to juveniles in Türkiye and should also be considered an important problem.

The rest of this study is organized as follows: Section 1.1 briefly defines the theoretical background and risk factors causing juvenile delinquency. Section 1.2 summarizes the aim and novelty of the study. Section 2 defines the computational steps of the utilized method. Section 3 describes the application of the analysis and discusses the obtained results. Section 4 concludes the paper while highlighting some of the implications and limitations of this research, and future scope.

Theoretical Background and Risk Factors Causing Juvenile Delinquency

Numerous authors have proposed both theoretical and experimental research on the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency, demonstrating specific cases and the procedures for approaching and intervening from a diversity of perspectives, including theoretical and statistical aspects. The statistical perspective determines the significance of the phenomenon in correlation with several economic, cultural, social, and geographical indicators, etc., using descriptive (e.g., frequencies, averages) and inferential (e.g., t-test for independent samples, Cohen's d, Pearson correlation test, Mann-Whitney U test, Wilcoxon test) statistics (Mohammad and Nooraini, 2021; Ramer and Colder, 2022). The theoretical perspectives can be categorized as:

(i) The psychological perspective on delinquency focuses on individual-level characteristics that exist within all of us and interact with the environment (Gosain, 2020; Laeeque et al., 2022);

(ii) The sociological perspective on juvenile delinquency proposes that societal factors and social processes affect delinquent behavior (Mohammad and Nooraini, 2021);

(iii) The economic perspective focuses on the costs incurred as a result of the direct and indirect consequences of delinquencies (Mack et al., 2007; Martins et al., 2018);

(iv) The legal perspective relates to the manner and forms of violating common rules, as well as the legal system of punishments based on the seriousness of the acts and approaches to preventing recidivism (Lai et al., 2015; Snehil and Sagar, 2020);

(v) The prospective perspective refers to the future evolution of the phenomenon as well as particular adjacents' or social groups' proclivity for criminality (Unnever and Chouhy, 2020);

(vi) A holistic, integrative vision of all these perspectives is the focus of to-day's efforts (Yun et al., 2016; Jolliffe et al., 2017; Bobbio et al., 2020).

Throughout the literature, innumerable studies have been conducted to understand the risk factors causing juvenile delinquency from theoretical and statistical perspectives, but very few have utilized more comprehensive and recent methods such as structural equation models (van Dijk et al., 2020), panel data analysis (Dutta et al., 2020), meta-analysis (Emmelkamp et al., 2020; Geerlings et al., 2020), and machine learning methods (Pelham et al., 2020; Ucuz et al., 2020). No study, however, can be identified that utilizes multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods.

When considering that any change in the constants of social and cultural life not only affects human behaviors but also alters the risk factors associated with delinquency, utilizing MCDM or machine learning methods can capture the overall features with regard to these changes and can be adopted to identify critical risk factors for juvenile delinquency.

A variety of studies have well explained the most important risk factors, especially the World Youth Report (2003), prepared biennially, which is the flagship publication on youth issues of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. This report outlines the causes of juvenile delinquency as (i) economic and social factors, (ii) cultural factors, (iii) urbanization, (iv) family, (v) migration, (vi) the media, (vii) exclusion, (viii) peer influence, (ix) delinquent identities, and (x) offenders and victims, as described in the World Youth Report, 2003: 188-207; Nelson, 2016; Pardini, 2016: 259-260; Siegel and Welsh, 2018; Bobbio et al., 2020; Kennedy et al., 2020; Kratcoski et al., 2020; Roberson and Azaola, 2021.

Economic and social factors. Juvenile delinquency is triggered by the unfavourable outcomes of economic and social conditions such as political instability, weakening of major institutions, and economic contractions/crises. Socio-economic problems often lead to unemployment and low incomes among adolescents, which may increase the probability of their involvement in deviant acts.

Cultural factors. Delinquent behavior is common in social environments where acceptable behavioral norms have collapsed. Under such circumstances, many of the cultural rules that dissuade members from acting unacceptably may lose their importance, allowing adolescents to engage in rebellious, deviant, or even criminal acts.

Urbanization. A variety of studies have highlighted that crime rates are greater in countries with more urbanized populations. In rural areas, family and community control among adolescents is easier, helping to cope with antisocial behaviour and criminal acts.

Family. Many studies have proved that juvenile delinquency is less common in children who receive proper parental care and supervision. Inappropriate family structure and conditions such as weak internal linkages and integration, poor parenting skills, single-parent households, physical/emotional abuse, family criminal history, and socioeconomic status are closely related to juvenile delinquency.

Migration. Because of adaptation difficulties to new social and economic life, immigrants usually find ease in their sub-cultural environments. Divergences in social and cultural norms and values in different ethnic sub-cultures often lead to cultural conflicts that are a major cause of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity.

Media. Many studies have demonstrated that children and adolescents who watch violence tend to behave more aggressively or violently. Especially, boys aged 8 to 12 have been reported to be more vulnerable to such influences.

Exclusion. Under the impact of some circumstances such as individual identity crises, broken social relationships, and unemployment, a growing number of members face exclusion. Juveniles' exclusion has an immense impact on building delinquent careers, which later conclude in delinquent acts.

Peer influence. Peer groups can play a vital role in developing behavioural patterns through the transition period to adulthood. Many criminological studies have provided strong empirical support that peer group affiliations are responsible for non-trivial amounts of identified varieties of antisocial behaviour, delinquency, and substance use.

Delinquent identities. Delinquent identity is a comprehensive phenomenon of identities related to delinquency itself and an individual's ethnicity, race, class, and gender. Delinquent identity is generally formed as a variant to the society's formal identity. Through the creation process of deviant identities, conflict and violence are crucial aspects. In many socio-cultural environments, the criminal lifestyle has been idealised to some extent, and becoming a member of a deviant group is one of the limited ways of social association for disadvantaged youth.

Offenders and victims. A victim's behaviour is highly connected with criminal deeds. A victim's reaction may provoke an offender; nevertheless, "appropriate" behaviour also may help to prevent or at least lessen the consequences of criminal behaviour. A variety of studies have indicated that the aforementioned victim's behaviour can involve personal characteristics (e.g., a social role/situation, individual or family status, financial prosperity) or logistical characteristics (e.g., the time and place of a confrontation).

The Current Study

The experimental studies highlighted that the authorities have exerted tremendous effort to determine juveniles at risk of delinquency and the factors related to delinquency. Nevertheless, a fundamental limitation is that no other papers have focused on identifying the comparative significance of risk factors after considering all possible degrees of risk factors in a quantitative model. This limitation hinders the public authorities from forming a varied perspective on what interventions are compulsory to prevent or at least minimize adolescents' delinquent behaviour (Choi, 2022). In this study, a quantitative analysis was employed to determine the significance degrees of risk factors that contribute to the emergence of juvenile delinquency according to evaluations from five experts.

At this point, it was considered appropriate to use MCDM methods because of the subjective nature of juvenile delinquency and the risk factors that cause it, and the necessity of performing the analysis based on expert opinions. Thus, it is aimed to provide decision support for the strategies to be developed for the

prevention of juvenile delinquency, focusing on which risk factors may be prioritized to what extent, and which should be allocated more resources and effort in order to prevent juvenile delinquency more effectively.

A limited number of subjective methods have been proposed for weighting the evaluation criteria in decision problems (e.g., AHP, DEMATEL, SWARA, etc.). The FUCOM method, one of the most recent methods whose robustness has been proven in many studies, was utilized (it is described in detail why FUCOM is utilized in Section 3) to overcome the disadvantages and limitations of other methods such as the complexity of the computational steps, the need for special software, and the inconsistency in pairwise comparisons.

Throughout the literature review, many qualitative and quantitative studies have been identified that investigate the causes of juvenile delinquency and the relationships between these causes, respectively. On the other hand, to the best of our knowledge, no other study has been identified that:

    i.   Prioritizes or determines the significance degrees of risk factors causing juvenile delinquency;

    ii.   Utilizes MCDM methods in general and the FUCOM method in particular, for juvenile delinquency. Thus, it is believed that this study may provide a different perspective to the juvenile delinquency literature.

FULL CONSISTENCY METHOD

The Full Consistency Method (FUCOM), a subjective weighting MCDM method, was developed by Pamucar, Stevic, and Sremac. This linear programming-based method employs a minimization model consisting of two groups of constraints to obtain the optimal values of each criterion's weights (Pamucar et al., 2018: 1). The aim is to minimize the Deviation from Full Consistency (DFC) in the objective function of FUCOM. The level of DFC is the deviation value of the computed significance degrees/weight coefficients from the predicted comparative priorities of the criteria. Thus, DFC confirms the reliability of the computed weights of criteria according to the evaluations of experts/decision-makers. The FUCOM model includes two constraint groups that ensure the optimal values of significance degrees are met, incorporating conditions that the relations of the significance degrees of criteria should be equal to the comparative priorities and conditions of mathematical transitivity (Pamucar et al., 2018: 1). The main advantages of FUCOM compared to existing subjective weighting methods are listed as follows (Pamucar et al., 2018: 2; Puska et al., 2021: 9 and Erdal and Korucuk, 2023:910):

    i.   It requires fewer pairwise comparisons of criteria (only n-1 pairwise comparisons);

    ii.   It eliminates the problem of inconsistency in pairwise comparisons, thus providing convenience to the decision-maker by fully respecting the principle of transitivity;

    iii.   Due to its optimization-based nature, it allows for the computation of reliable values of the significance degrees of decision criteria;

    iv.   The computational steps are not complicated;

v.   It enables the use of decimal numbers in pairwise comparisons, eliminating the need to use only integers.

Due to these advantages, FUCOM has been effectively used in many real-life problems such as ranking airline companies (Badi and Abdulshahed, 2019), selecting forklifts (Fazlollahtabar et al., 2019), choosing landfill sites (Badi and Kridish, 2020), locating a brigade command post during combat operations (Božanić et al., 2020), determining a distribution channel (Dalic et al., 2020), selecting fighter aircraft (Hoan and Ha, 2021), e-commerce applications (Mahendra, 2021), healthcare waste incinerators (Puška et al., 2021), and wind farm site locations (Deveci et al., 2022). Its superiority over many methods has been emphasized (Pamucar et al., 2018; Badi and Abdulshahed, 2019; Fazlollahtabar et al., 2019).

FUCOM can be implemented after the experts and decision criteria are determined, and evaluations are made by applying the calculation steps of the method within the group decision-making process, where 'n' symbolizes the number of decision criteria and 'E' symbolizes the experts.

A scale of [1-9], where '1' represents the highest preference, is generally used for subjective evaluations where the objective values of the criteria are not known (Fazlollahtabar et al., 2019: 52). Before proceeding to the calculation steps of the method, the problem description must be defined. At this step, it is necessary to determine the goal(s) to be achieved as a result of the analysis, the factors affecting the problem, and the decision-makers or experts whose opinions will be consulted (Erdal, 2021: 475). The schematic representation of the method is demonstrated in Fig. 1, and the computational steps are presented below (Pamucar et al., 2018: 5-7; Badi and Abdulshahed, 2019: 4-7; Hoan and Ha, 2020: 54-55):

Figure 1. *Schematic Representation of FUCOM*
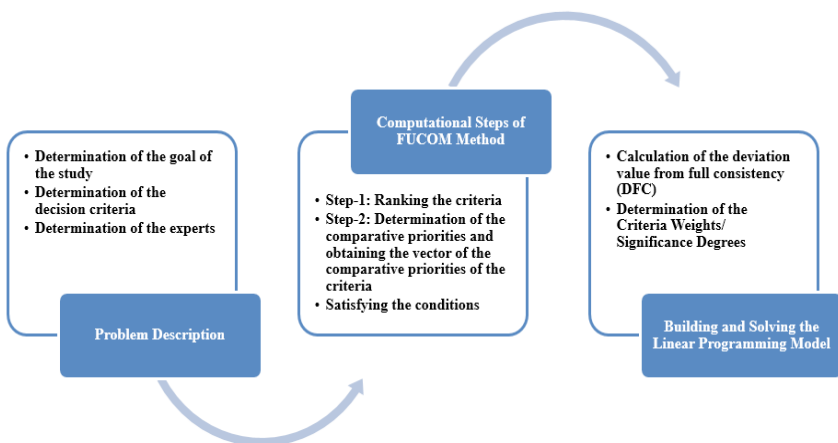
Step-1: Ranking the criteria

In the first step, the decision criteria are ranked in descending order of importance by the decision-makers/experts, starting from the criterion considered to have the highest degree of significance to the least. In cases where more than one decision-maker participates in the process, each decision-maker ranks the criteria in

descending order of importance. Accordingly, the ranking of criteria corresponds to the number of decision-makers. In the group decision application, the final ranking is determined by taking the geometric mean of the criteria rankings determined by the decision-makers. Thus, consistent with the expected values of the weight coefficients, the decision criteria are ranked as shown in Eq. (1):

$$C_{j(1)} > C_{j(2)} > \cdots C_{j(k)} \tag{1}$$

where k depicts the criterion rank.

Step-2: Determination of the comparative priorities and obtaining the vector of the comparative priorities of the criteria

In this step, a pairwise comparison of the ranking criteria from the previous step is carried out. Comparisons are made according to the criterion evaluated as the most important. In this context, since comparing the most important criterion with itself results in a score of '1', this criterion is assigned a '1'. Scoring for all other criteria is then conducted using the predefined scale, respectively. After the scoring of all criteria is completed, the comparative priority ($\varphi_{k/(k+1)}$, k=1,2,…,n, where k depicts the rank of the criteria), of the evaluation criteria is computed as in as in Eq. (2). If two successive criteria are considered to be of equal importance by the decision-maker/experts, the result of this comparison will be be $\varphi_{k/(k+1)}=1$.

$$\Phi=(\varphi_{1/2}, \varphi_{2/3}),\varphi_{3/4}),...,\varphi_{k/(k+1)}) \tag{2}$$

For instance, let's assume a problem with three-criteria that the criteria are ranked as $C_2 > C_1 > C_3$ by the decision-maker/experts, a scale of [1-9] is used for scoring the preferences ($\omega_{C_{j(k)}} \in [1,9]$), and the weights of criteria are determined as $\omega_{C_2}=1, \omega_{C_1})=3.5$ ve $\omega_{C_3})=6$, respectively. In this case, the comparative priority(φ_{C_2}/C_1) of C_2 to C_1 can be computed as $\varphi_{C_2}/C_1=3.5/1=3.5$ where $\varphi_{C_1/C_3})=6/3.5=1.714$.

Step-3: Satisfying the conditions

At this step, the final values the significance degrees of the decision criteria $((w_1,w_2,...,w_n)^T)$ are determined. For this, two conditions are required to be satisfied:

Condition-1. The ratio of weight coefficients of the decision criteria should be equal to the comparative priority among the observed criteria ($\varphi_{k/(k+1)}$) described in Step-2; i.e., that the condition depicted in Eq. (3) is satisfied;

$$w_{k}/w_{k+1}= \varphi_{k/(k+1)} \tag{3}$$

Condition-2. The final values of the weight coefficients/degrees of the significance of the decision criteria should satisfy the requirements of mathematical transitivity. Namely, the Eq. (4) should be satisfied;

$$\varphi_{k/(k+1)} \otimes \varphi_{(k+1)/(k+2)}=\varphi_{(k/(k+2)} \tag{4}$$

The comparative priority among the observed decision criteria can be described as Eq. (5) by using the Eqs. (3 and 4);

$$\varphi_{k/(k+1)} = {}^{w_k}/w_{k+1} \quad \text{ve} \quad \varphi_{(k+1)/(k+2)} = {}^{w_{k+1}}/w_{k+2} \tag{5}$$

The expression of this equation (Eq. (5)) as weight coefficients will define the Eq. (6);

$$ {}^{w_k}/w_{k+1} \otimes {}^{w_{k+1}}/w_{k+2} = {}^{w_k}/w_{k+2} \tag{6} $$

Thus, the condition-2 that the final values of the weight coefficients/degrees of the significance of the decision criteria required to satisfy are computed, namely (Eq. (7));

$$ {}^{w_k}/w_{k+2} = \varphi_{k/(k+1)} \otimes \varphi_{(k+1)/(k+2)} \tag{7} $$

By building and solving the step of the linear programming model, the final values of the decision criteria/degrees of significance are determined with the DFC value. Full consistency, namely, minimum DFC (χ) is met just if transitivity is fully regarded. In other words, if Condition-1 expressed in Eq. (3) and Condition-2 expressed in Eq. (7) are met, the minimum DFC is obtained. Thus, the necessity for maximum consistency is satisfied, namely, DFC is for the computed values of the significance degrees. To satisfy the conditions, the values of the weight coefficients, satisfy the conditions, expressed in Eq. (8), with the minimization of the value χ;

$$ |{}^{w_k}/w_{k+1} - \varphi_{k/(k+1)}| \leq \chi \quad \text{ve} \quad |{}^{w_k}/w_{k+2} - \varphi_{k/(k+1)} \otimes \varphi_{(k+1)/(k+2)}| \leq \chi \tag{8} $$

By solving the linear programming model (9), the final values/degrees of the significance of the decision criteria $((w_1, w_2, ..., w_n)^T)$ and the value of DFC (χ) is calculated.

min χ

$$ \text{s.t.} \begin{cases} \left| \dfrac{w_{j(k)}}{w_{j(k+1)}} - \varphi_{k/(k+1)} \right| \leq \chi, \quad \forall j \\[2mm] \left| \dfrac{w_{j(k)}}{w_{j(k+2)}} - \varphi_{k/(k+1)} \otimes \varphi_{(k+1)/(k+2)} \right| \leq \chi, \quad \forall j \\[2mm] \sum_{j=1}^{n} w_j = 1, \quad \forall j \\[2mm] w_j \geq 0, \quad \forall j \end{cases} \tag{9} $$

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE DEGREES OF RISK FACTORS CAUSING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY UTILIZING FUCOM

First of all, the subjective criteria weighting MCDM methods were investigated due to the subjective nature of the factors expressing juvenile delinquency and its causes. Based on the outcome of this investigation, it was decided to utilize the FUCOM method, and the alternative methods listed below were not preferred for the reasons specified:

i. Methods such as Swing, SMART, SMARTS, and SMARTER, some of the earliest proposed in the literature, have a mathematical infrastructure that is relatively ineffective compared to more recent methods (especially, these methods do not account for consistency).

ii. The AHP and BWM methods allow certain deviations in pairwise comparisons and do not fully maintain transitivity, leading to a decrease in model consistency, which negatively affects the reliability of the findings. Additionally, these methods require a high number of pairwise comparisons when there are n=10 criteria;

- 45, from the (n(n-1)/2) number of pairwise comparisons with AHP,
- 17, from the (2n-3) number of pairwise comparison with BWM, and
- 9, from the (n-1) number of pairwise comparisons with FUCOM.

iii. The reluctance of the experts due to the long evaluation process and complexity of the calculation steps of the DEMATEL and MACBETH methods,

iv. The SWARA method, which is one of the closest and recent methods comparing to FUCOM in terms of ease of computational steps and the number of pairwise comparisons, does not take into account the consistency as much as FUCOM (Pamucar et al., 2018: 22; Badi and Abdulshahed, 2019: 12).

Problem Description

Before proceeding with the computational steps of the FUCOM method, it is essential first to define the problem, as demonstrated in Fig. 3. At this stage, it is necessary to determine the goals to be achieved, the factors affecting the problem (decision criteria), and the experts whose opinions will be consulted. In this context, the goal of the study is 'to determine the significance degrees of the risk factors causing juvenile delinquency.

As for the decision criteria, the causes of juvenile delinquency, approved by the experts, are taken into consideration and are explained in detail in Section 1.1. The problem hierarchy, showing the goal and the risk factors causing juvenile delinquency (decision criteria) and their abbreviations, is presented in Fig. 2.

Figure 2. *Problem hierarchy*

The experts whose evaluations were consulted are the person who still gives lessons on crime and security subjects at the levels of bachelor and postgraduate as academic members of the Turkish Gendarmerie and Coast Guard Academy, and also worked as commanders in the law enforcement units of the Turkish General Command of Gendarmerie for many years.

Results and Discussion

The computational steps of the FUCOM method started with the first step, ranking the decision criteria from the most significant to the least. The results of the ranking process performed separately by each expert are presented in Table 1. For instance, the "Family (C4)" criterion has the highest significance according to the first expert (E1).

Table 1. *Ranking the Criteria by Experts*

Criteria	E_1	E_2	E_3	E_4	E_5
C_1	2	1	2	2	2
C_2	7	6	3	7	3
C_3	8	10	10	8	10
C_4	1	2	1	1	1
C_5	9	7	6	9	4
C_6	10	8	9	10	9
C_7	5	5	5	4	6
C_8	4	3	4	5	5
C_9	3	4	8	3	8
C_{10}	6	9	7	6	7

Then, pairwise comparisons of the ranking criteria are carried out and the comparative priorities are determined according to the [1,9] scale. So that, the vectors of the comparative priorities of the decision criteria are determined. Table 2 presents the experts' evaluations of each criterion by the [1,9] scale, and the geometric mean of the expert's evaluations, reflecting the group decision. For instance, since the the "C_4" criterion has the highest significance according to the first expert, the weights of C_4 (ω_{C_4}) equals "1" and ω_{C_1} is evaluated as "2" by the first expert. Thus, the comparative priorities are calculated: φ_{C_4}/C_1 =2/1=2. In other words, the comparative priority of the C_4 criterion compared to C_1 equals "2", for the first expert.

Table 2. *The experts' evaluations of each criterion and the geometric mean of them, reflecting the group decision*

Rank	E_1		E_2		E_3		E_4		E_5		Geo. Mean	
	Rank	ω_{Ci}	Rank	ω_{Ci}	Rank	ω_{Ci}	Rank	ω_{Ci}	Rank	ω_{Ci}	Rank	ω_{Ci}
1	C_4	1	C_1	1	C_4	1	C_4	1	C_4	1	C_4	1.246
2	C_1	2	C_4	3	C_1	2	C_1	2	C_1	3	C_1	1.888
3	C_9	4	C_8	4	C_2	2	C_9	2	C_2	4	C_8	3.728
4	C_8	4	C_9	4	C_8	3	C_7	3	C_5	4	C_7	4.129
5	C_7	4	C_7	5	C_7	4	C_8	3	C_8	5	C_2	4.416
6	C_{10}	4	C_2	6	C_5	4	C_{10}	5	C_7	5	C_9	4.555

7	C_2	7	C_5	8	C_{10}	5	C_2	5	C_{10}	6	C_{10}	5.833
8	C_3	9	C_6	8	C_9	7	C_3	6	C_9	7	C_5	6.044
9	C_5	9	C_{10}	9	C_6	9	C_5	7	C_6	8	C_3	8.299
10	C_6	9	C_3	9	C_3	9	C_6	9	C_3	9	C_6	8.586

After obtaining the comparative priorities presented in Table 2, the third step, satisfying the conditions, is initiated. At this step, Condition-1 is calculated with Eq. (3) whereas Condition-2 is calculated with Eq. (7), and the obtained results are presented in Table 3. For instance, Condition-1 is obtained for : and Condition-2 are obtained for : .

Table 3. *Satisfying the conditions*

Significance Rank	C_4	C_1	C_8	C_7	C_2	C_9	C_{10}	C_5	C_3	C_6
Vectors	1.246	1.888	3.728	4.129	4.416	4.555	5.833	6.044	8.299	8.586
Condition-1	1.516	1.974	1.108	1.070	1.031	1.281	1.036	1.373	1.035	
Condition-2	2.993	2.187	1.185	1.103	1.321	1.327	1.423	1.421		

At the last step, the linear programming model was built and solved with Eq. (9), to determine the optimal values of the weight coefficients/degrees of the significance of the criteria:

$$\min \chi$$

$$s.t. \begin{cases} \left|\frac{w_4}{w_1} - 1.516\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_1}{w_8} - 1.974\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_8}{w_7} - 1.108\right| \leq \chi, \\ \left|\frac{w_7}{w_2} - 1.070\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_2}{w_9} - 1.031\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_9}{w_{10}} - 1.281\right| \leq \chi, \\ \left|\frac{w_{10}}{w_5} - 1.036\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_5}{w_3} - 1.373\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_3}{w_6} - 1.035\right| \leq \chi, \\ \left|\frac{w_4}{w_8} - 2.993\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_1}{w_7} - 2.187\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_8}{w_2} - 1.185\right| \leq \chi, \\ \left|\frac{w_7}{w_9} - 1.103\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_2}{w_{10}} - 1.321\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_9}{w_5} - 1.327\right| \leq \chi, \\ \left|\frac{w_{10}}{w_3} - 1.423\right| \leq \chi, \left|\frac{w_5}{w_6} - 1.421\right| \leq \chi, \\ \sum_{j=1}^{10} w_j = 1, \quad w_j \geq 0, \quad \forall j \end{cases} \quad \forall j$$

In this study, the Solver plug-in of Microsoft Excel software was used to solve the linear model. The significance degrees (the final values of weight coefficients) of the decision criteria, final rankings, and DFC (χ) are computed and presented in Table 4 and Fig. 3.

Table 4. *The final values of weight coefficients of the criteria, final rankings and DFC (χ)*

Criteria	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	C_5	C_6	C_7	C_8	C_9	C_{10}
Degrees of Significance	0.185	0.079	0.042	0.280	0.058	0.041	0.085	0.094	0.077	0.060

Final Ranking	2	5	9	1	8	10	4	3	6	7
DFC	0,000000004									

Accordingly, the final ranking of the risk factors causing juvenile delinquency were obtained as; Family (C_4) >> Economic and Social Factors (C_1) >> Peer Influence (C_8) >> Exclusion (C_7) >> Cultural Factors (C_2) >> Delinquent Identities (C_9)>> Offenders and Victims (C_6) >> Migration (C_5) >> Urbanization (C_5) >> The Media (C_1) by utilizing the FUCOM method. In addition, the DFC value was calculated as 0.000000004, and it was determined that the pairwise comparisons conducted by the experts were perfectly consistent and the results obtained could be trusted.

Figure 3. *The values of weight coefficients of the criteria (degrees of significance)*

The obtained results indicate that the most significant risk factors causing juvenile delinquency are, by far, 'Family' and 'Economic and Social Factors', respectively. In fact, these results align with the literature. Sociologists, researchers, and criminologists have recognized that youths who have strong attachments to their parents and a high commitment to their social environment are less likely to engage in delinquency (Chapple et al., 2005; Kroher and Tobias, 2015). The literature supports the results of this study, emphasizing family and economic/social perspectives as the most focused topics in statistical factor analysis and crime prediction studies. Contrary to the literature, only one paper has been identified where no statistically significant effect was found on juvenile delinquency from familial subfactors (Mack et al., 2007).

The findings of this study may be useful for public authorities and crime prevention specialists in determining the expected impact of targeting a known shared factor for intervention purposes. It is concluded that they should focus their attention and concentrate their limited resources significantly on family-related subfactors. Similarly, they should give more consideration to both macro

and micro-level economic and social subfactors to mitigate the negative consequences of juvenile delinquency.

The following managerial insights can be drawn for the application of the utilized method. In MCDM studies using AHP and DEMATEL, which are other subjective weighting methods widely used in the literature, some authors have reported that face-to-face interviews with experts can produce some contradictory and inconsistent evaluations, noting that many mistakes could be made when using the questionnaire method in MCDM studies (Erdal, 2018a: 114; Erdal, 2018b: 932; Korucuk and Erdal, 2019: 170). In contrast, while conducting face-to-face interviews according to the FUCOM method for the evaluations of this study, no difficulties were noticed. It is concluded that, as a subjective weighting MCDM method, FUCOM can be used effectively in determining the significance degrees of risk factors causing juvenile delinquency, due to the error-free transfer of expert evaluations to the calculation processes and the consistency obtained.

CONCLUSION

Juvenile delinquents constitute a population not usually recognized as needing services to prevent them from becoming tomorrow's serious, violent, and chronic offenders. Although many preventive programs have been developed over the years, it is clear that public authorities and crime prevention specialists should focus on developing and implementing more effective policies and procedures directed toward using available resources to address the problem.

In this study, the FUCOM was utilized to determine the significance degrees of risk factors that cause juvenile delinquency, a complex MCDM problem that includes subjective and conflicting factors. For this purpose, face-to-face interviews were conducted with five academic members who have provided undergraduate and graduate education on crime and security subjects and also served as commanders in the law enforcement units of the Turkish General Command of Gendarmerie for many years.

Throughout the literature review, many qualitative and quantitative studies have been identified that investigate the causes of juvenile delinquency and the relationships between these causes. On the other hand, to the best of our knowledge, no other study has been identified that: (i) prioritizes or determines the significance degrees of risk factors causing juvenile delinquency, (ii) utilizes MCDM methods in general, and the FUCOM in particular, for juvenile delinquency.

In this context, during the planning phase of strategies for preventing juvenile delinquency, it is essential to define which risk factors should be focused on and to what extent, and which should be allocated more resources and effort to prevent juvenile delinquency more effectively. Furthermore, it has been concluded that the FUCOM method can be effectively used for juvenile delinquency decision-making analysis.

The obtained results indicate that the most significant risk factors causing juvenile delinquency are, by far, 'Family' and 'Economic and Social Factors', respectively, in line with the literature.

Within the framework of the study results, it is necessary to focus on the family factor, which is a fundamental indicator. Juveniles are more open to change than

adults; therefore, supporting them with healthy opportunities based on fundamental skills and social and sports activities can lead to behavioural changes. In other words, it is evident that this will positively impact delinquency rates and perceptions of delinquency. Moreover, to prevent delinquency, it would be appropriate to develop and disseminate comprehensive studies based on the juveniles' families, schools, and society.

Like every study, this one has limitations. One of the main limitations is that the number of expert groups examined is limited, and this number could not be increased due to time constraints. Another limitation is that the study is specific to the field of juvenile delinquency. Additionally, literature reviews did not identify a set of criteria concerning juvenile delinquency.

Especially considering the deficiencies and limitations presented in this study, the number of experts on juvenile delinquency could be increased. Parameters that influence and are influenced by juvenile delinquency could be included.

It is considered that this study may contribute to the literature by expanding on the following issues, both in terms of revealing the limitations of this study and suggesting directions for future research:

i. The risk factors causing juvenile delinquency evaluated in this study could be expanded.

ii. Comparative analyses could be conducted specific to various geographical regions, provinces, or countries.

iii. Although the experts whose opinions were consulted in this study have many years of experience as commanders of law enforcement units fighting against juvenile delinquency, the opinions of experts such as sociologists, pedagogues, and social workers, especially those working in courthouses, may also be consulted.

iv. To prevent juvenile delinquency behaviour, there is a need to develop and strengthen the parenting skills of parents and to ensure that juveniles at risk remain in education. Development of school-focused preventive, protective, supportive, and empowering services is necessary, therefore implementing school social service practices is essential (Çabuk 2022: 140). v. Different subjective weighting methods (e.g., AHP, DEMATEL, SWARA, SMART) may be used, and comparative analyses may be employed with the results obtained in this study (Korucuk, et al., 2022:21).

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EDUCATIONAL INVESTMENT AS SOFT POWER: CHINA'S STRATEGY IN CULTIVATING QATARI HUMAN CAPITAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the strategic use of education as a tool of soft power, focusing on China's investment in the education of Qatari human capital. It explores how education, a non-coercive form of influence, contributes to China's global reputation and socio-economic progress. The research employs a mixed-method approach, including quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to assess the impact of Chinese educational investments on Qatari students. The findings indicate that China's educational support, through scholarships and cultural exchange, positively influences Qatari students' perceptions and fosters a favourable image of China. The study highlights the significance of educational investment in building soft power, with China utilizing scholarships and cultural programs to attract international students, particularly from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. The effectiveness of China's soft power strategy is demonstrated through increased educational cooperation under the "Belt and Road" initiative, contributing to China's global influence and international relations.

Keywords: Soft power, Educational investment, China, Qatari students, International relations.

INTRODUCTION

Nations aim to enhance their global standing and socio-economic development through a blend of hard and soft power strategies. Soft power, as defined by Kalin (2011), allows countries to influence others through their cultural, educational, and political appeal without coercion. This form of power is crucial in diplomacy and international relations, emphasizing cultural exchanges and education to wield influence (Baykurt and De Grazia, 2021). Research indicates the significant role of soft power in shaping international perceptions and relationships, with education being a pivotal area for investment, particularly in fostering human capital as noted by Mayo (2016).

Education emerges as a strategic tool for global influence, with major powers, including China, investing in higher education to nurture foreign human capital, thereby facilitating innovation and collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Zreik, 2021). China's focus on Arab students, through scholarships and educational programs, aims to strengthen ties and develop skills relevant to modern challenges (Roberts and Ching, 2021). The effectiveness of these educational investments is seen in the diverse international student body in China, notably from countries aligned with the "Belt and Road" initiative, highlighting education's role in long-term international relations and economic development (Hussain and Shen, 2019; Ahmad and Shah, 2018; Tian and Liu, 2021). Education, as linked to early economic theories by Petty and Smith, is fundamental in cultivating human capital, with both direct and indirect benefits from such investments (Folloni and Vittadini, 2010).

The nexus of culture and education emerges as a potent soft power tool, spotlighting trends in socio-economic growth and cultural diversity (Lai and Lu, 2012). Key emerging nations like Brazil, Russia, India, and China are advancing human development through education, aiming to foster innovation-centric economies. Investment in education, particularly in attracting international students, is recognized as a crucial soft power strategy (Li and Xue, 2023). The proficiency of these students in the host country's sciences, culture, and language enhances their social capital, effectively extending the influence of their native cultures abroad (Odrowaz-Coates, 2018). Such educational engagements empower hosting nations to project their soft power globally, surpassing traditional military might. The focus on developing domestic education systems and treating educated returnees as assets reflects a strategic approach to leverage soft power for national benefit (Zhao, 2014). This study corroborates the efficacy of soft power, exemplified by China's investment in Qatari education, underlining the transformative impact of soft policy measures on both donor and recipient nations.

RESEARCH METHOD

Our mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, allowed us to assess the impact of education on Qatari students. Initially, the quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire divided into three sections: basic information, career development, and applicant satisfaction. The satisfaction survey's factor analysis examined 8 factors, each with 5 to 15 questions. For data analysis, including reliability, factor, correlation, and regression analyses, SPSS and AMOS software were employed.

In the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted featuring 7 questions focused on the students' educational experiences in China. These structured interviews utilized open-ended questions to gather in-depth data.

Finally, we applied SWOT and TOWS analyses to pinpoint the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to studying in China, based on the students' personal experiences. This comprehensive approach provided a nuanced understanding of the educational impact on Qatari students.

Limitation of the Research

Given that the sample for this study did not encompass all students from the GCC region studying in China, a more detailed and extensive investigation is warranted. Additionally, comparing this with the soft power policy of another country could yield very intriguing results.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF SOFT POWER POLICY

The concepts of hard power, soft power, and smart power are fundamental in the fields of political science and international relations. The theory of soft power was introduced by Professor Joseph Samuel Nye Jr. of Harvard University, who defined soft power as the ability to indirectly influence the interests and circumstances of a target country. This influence is achieved through the appeal of a nation's culture, values, and language (Nye, 1990). Hayden (2012) further recognized soft power as a means of achieving international objectives through agreement, persuasion, and attraction, rather than through coercion. Thus, soft power operates through the strategic use of cultural diplomacy, educational initiatives, and other means to persuade and integrate nations into a cooperative social framework (Nye, 2004). According to foreign policy analysis, soft power is built on three main pillars.

1. Civilization (attraction with fascination)

2. Political reputation (reaching destination domestically and abroad)

3. Foreign policy (legal) (Li, 2009; Zreik, 2022a).

Hereof, the soft policy formation of China could be the following:

*   Head-Diplomacy

*   Main body-Political value

*   Arms and legs-Cultural policy

This illustrates that China is seen as a key player on international platforms through its blend of diplomacy, political values, and cultural policies. Conversely, Joseph Samuel Nye Jr. has argued that transforming hard power, such as economic might, into soft power is viable given the current global economic interdependence. He also pointed out that every nation's soft power strategy is distinct, reflecting its unique characteristics, in his 2013 research. Moreover, Nye highlighted the differences in soft power approaches, noting that the United States' soft power involves public participation, unlike the soft power strategies of China and Russia (Nye, 2004).

For this reason, contemporary major powers and industrialized or developed countries prioritize safeguarding their spheres of influence and national interests through soft power strategies. Soft power is viewed as both a resource and an opportunity, whereas a soft power policy is considered a guarantee of power and security. However, some Western scholars have criticized Professor Nye for the perceived limitations of his soft power strategy, arguing that it focuses solely on the aspect of attraction, including resources and opportunities, rather than on strategic implementation of soft power (Roselle et al., 2014).

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION OF CHINA

Zhao et al. (2012) distinguished consumer satisfaction in transactions from service quality, the latter being an attitude from long-term outcomes. Anderson et al. (2006) observed student evaluations as short-term attitudes towards educational experiences, blurring the lines between service quality and educational satisfaction. Bitner (1990) linked service quality directly to customer satisfaction, contingent on meeting expectations. Variations in student satisfaction arise from diverse programs and cultural backgrounds (Arambewela and Hall 2009). Clemes et al. (2013) analyzed academic satisfaction in China, focusing on Administrative, Physical, Core Educational, Support Facilities, and Transformative Quality to assess the influence of soft power on Qatari student development.

GCC students benefit from over 500 annual scholarships, including from the Chinese Government and President Xi, surpassing offerings from countries like Australia. This supports GCC region education delegates in evaluating their Chinese university experiences based on education quality satisfaction.

This study defines satisfaction as Qatari students' perceptions of Chinese university facilities and environment quality, assessed across several categories including personal life improvement, education, economy, culture and society of the home country, academic support, and overall satisfaction with the scholarship and living conditions in China. Reliability and factor analyses underpin the quantitative data analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF SOFT POWER POLICY

Wang Huning's seminal 1993 article introduced soft power as a concept, emphasizing its potential through the global spread of culture. He suggested that a culture recognized universally contributes significantly to a nation's soft power (Patapan and Wang, 2018). China now allocates $10 billion yearly to soft power, exceeding the investments of the US, UK, France, Germany, and Japan combined (Carminati, 2022; Zreik, 2022b). The country offers scholarships to Gulf Cooperation Council students and promotes Chinese language studies, with educational institutions teaching in Chinese increasing from 550 to 1,760 between 2002 and 2010 (Gao and Hua, 2021). This reflects a broader trend where soft power, through language, culture, education, and diplomacy, plays a critical role in shaping international dynamics (Wojciuk et al., 2015).

The 2019 "The Soft Power 30" Portland survey ranked China 27th worldwide in soft power implementation, highlighting its cultural influence and financial leadership through initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Edney et al., 2019). China and South Korea are noted for their favourable image among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) youth, attributed to their appealing entertainment and education sectors (Hopkyns, 2017; Ulrichsen, 2018). This demographic shows a high regard for the investments from these countries, underscoring the potency of soft power among younger generations.

Empirical studies further validate China's soft power success, revealing positive perceptions of Chinese investment in countries like New Zealand, Nigeria, Lebanon, Mexico, South Africa, and Brazil (Huffer, 2020; Lovric, 2016). This research aims to delve into China's soft power influence on Qatari youth through educational investments, assessing the shifts in their attitudes towards China and elucidating the factors driving these changes.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

I. Quantitative Data Analysis

Our study employed SPSS 26 and AMOS for analyzing the quantitative data from the questionnaire, which was divided into several sections. The initial section collected demographic data through 13 questions on personal and academic backgrounds, including prior experience with Chinese language studies, intentions for studying further in China, and educational completion status. This information was gathered to explore the relationship between student demographics and their satisfaction levels, assessing the impact of China's soft power through educational initiatives.

Subsequent sections of the questionnaire evaluated respondents' career trajectories before and after their studies, aiming to link career advancement with China's educational investments as a soft power strategy. Another segment focused on personal and academic experiences, comparing the Chinese education system with those of respondents' home countries, and gauging overall satisfaction with the study experience in China.

The study concluded with correlation and regression analyses to determine the effect of educational investment on the personal and professional lives of students and alumni, based on their responses.

Figure 1. *Gender and Age of Respondents*

GENDER

Male 32%
Female 68%

- male
- female

AGE

34-40
12%

28-33
12%

22-27
19%

17-21
57%

- 17-21
- 22-27
- 28-33
- 34-40
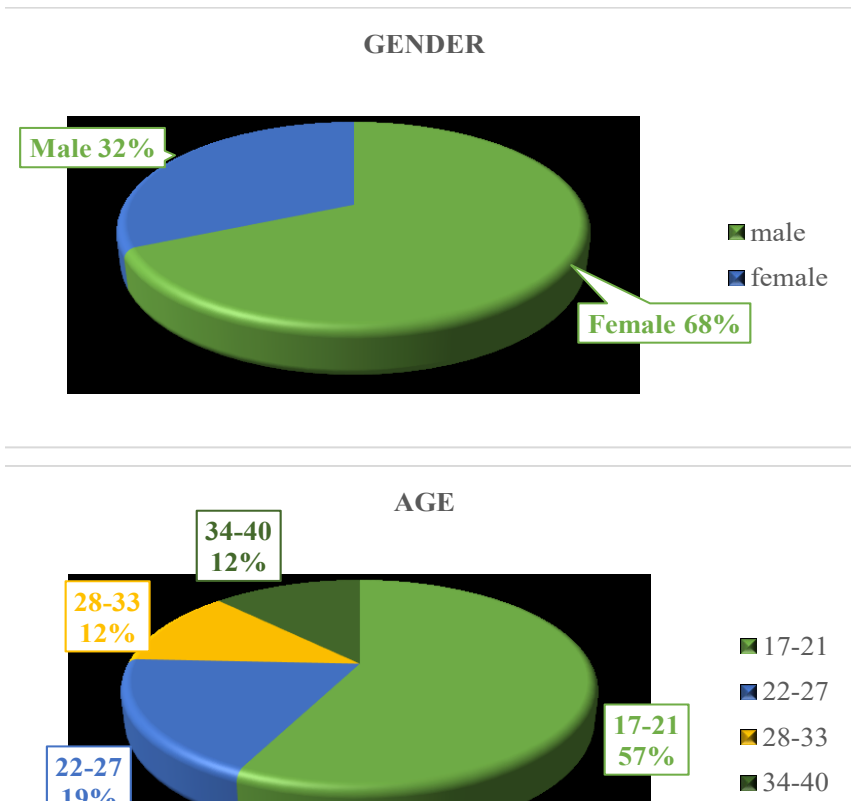
Source: Author's data

The Qatari population places significant emphasis on the education and development of their females, resulting in a majority of survey respondents being female (68%) compared to males (32%). The largest portion of respondents falls within the younger age group of 17-20 years, while a smaller segment consists of individuals aged 30 and above, who are more mature and likely to be married. Figure 1 reveals the evolving dynamics of soft power in Qatar.

Figure 2. *Marital Status and Educational Finance of Respondents*
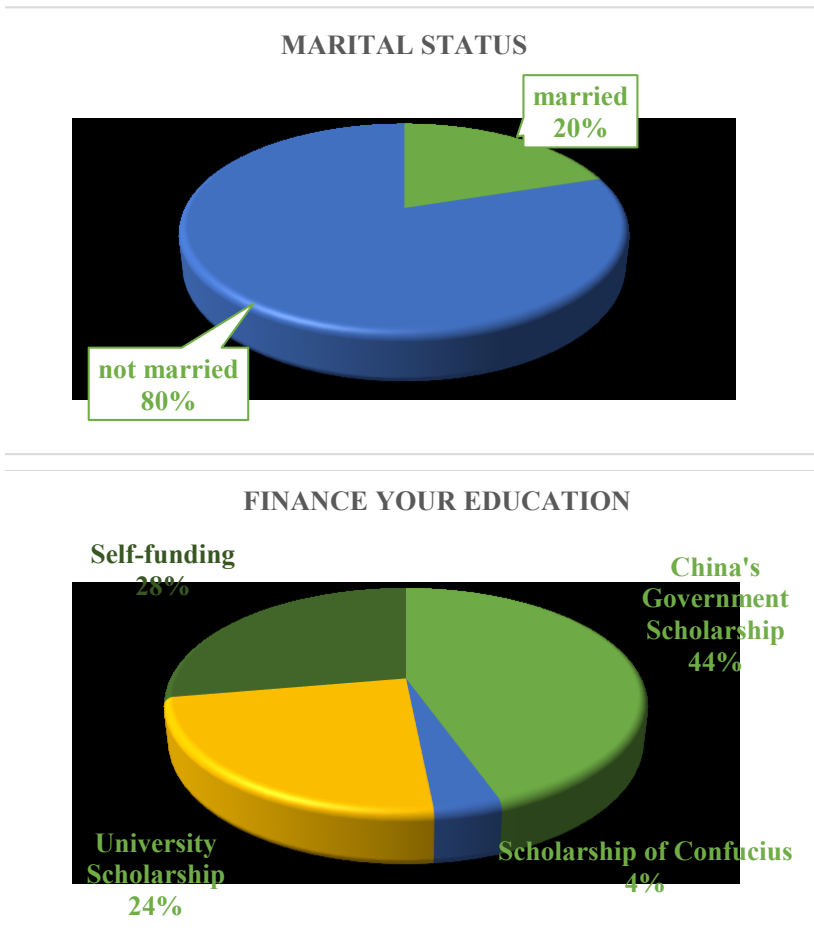
Source: Author's data

Figure 2 provides data on the marital status and sources of educational funding for the respondents. It shows that 20% of the respondents are married, which may influence their decisions and experiences regarding international study due to potential familial responsibilities. Understanding marital status helps in assessing the support systems and personal obligations that could impact students' academic engagement and success. Additionally, 44% of the students receive funding from the Chinese Scholarship Council, including 24% with university scholarships, while the remainder self-fund their studies. These find-

ings indicate that China's educational support primarily targets economic and developmental gains for the recipients, rather than focusing solely on spreading political values or cultural influence. This approach differentiates China's use of soft power in education from Western models, which often combine educational initiatives with the promotion of democratic values and cultural exchanges.

Figure 3. *Studying years and Foreign Language of Respondents*
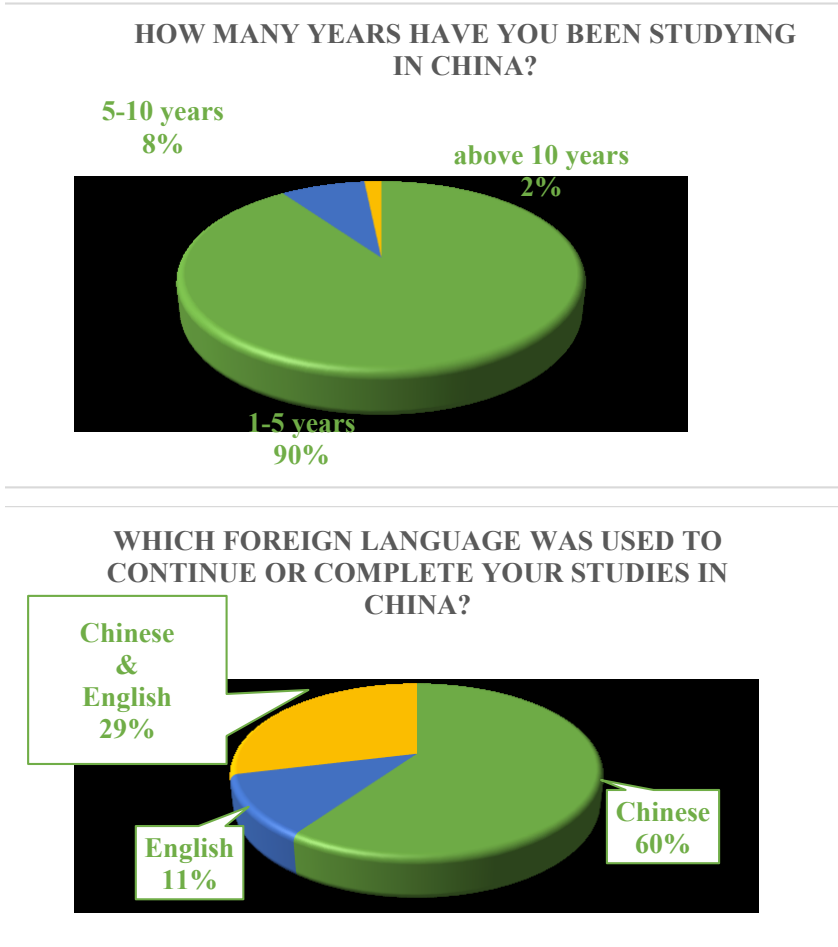
Source: Author's data

Most students (90%) have been in China for up to 5 years, primarily in bachelor's programs. A distinct 10% have resided over ten years, likely pursuing advanced degrees with their families. Sixty percent of Qatari students engage in Chinese-taught programs after a preparatory language year, whereas 29% study in bilingual programs, possibly due to language challenges. The rest are in English-taught courses, reflecting China's soft power growth through incorporating Chinese language into young students' education.

Figure 4. *Degree of Respondents*

Which degree are you pursuing or received from universities of China?

Master 19%

Ph.D 6%
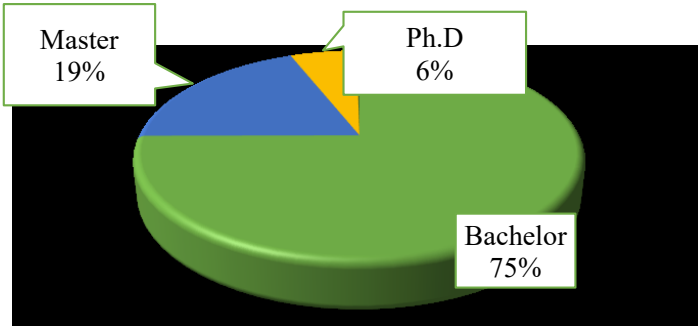
Bachelor 75%

Source: Author's data

Figure 4 indicates that bachelor's degree students constitute the largest segment of respondents (75%), suggesting that younger individuals are more attracted to soft power policies, influenced by culture and language, compared to their older counterparts. Master's degree applicants account for 19%, while Ph.D. candidates represent only 6%, which may be attributed to the questionnaire targeting primarily bachelor's level students rather than those pursuing higher education. Figure 4 demonstrates that public diplomacy is an effective tool for attracting international students and facilitating exchanges, as younger individuals play a key role in generating long-term benefits for the host country by becoming third-party advocates.

Table 1. *Profession and Region of Respondents*

What is area of your studies?				Which regions do/ did you study?			
	Medical science	33	8.5		Beijing	69	17.3
	Law and legislation	29	7.5		Shanghai	51	12.8
	Education studies	14	3.6		Wuhan	32	8.0
	Psychology	12	3.1		Tianjin	16	4.0
	Economy and business	110	28.5		Huhehot	53	13.3
	Chinese language and culture	25	6.5		Xi An	5	1.3
	Engineering and technology	83	21.5		Dalian	13	3.3
	Agriculture	2	0.5		Qingdao	8	2.0
	Other	78	20.2		Harbin	5	1.3
					Chongqing	1	0.3
					Nanjing	10	2.5
					Hangzhou	9	2.3
					Hangzhou	10	2.5
					Another city	118	29.5

Source: Author's data

A significant majority of students (28.5%) from Qatar are enrolled in economics and business programs, underscoring their strong interest in these fields. Engineering and technology follow with 21.5% of students, mirroring China's leadership in these sectors. Only 0.5% study agriculture. Additionally, 29.5% of respondents study in various regions of China, indicating the broad presence of Qatari students nationwide, who in turn promote Chinese cultural diversity. Moreover, 17.3% are based in Beijing for their studies, emphasizing the capital's role as a cultural, historical, and attractive metropolitan area for international students, including Qataris.

Table 2. *Studying Experience of Respondents*

Questions	Answer	Frequency	Percent
Have you ever learned Chinese before keeping on your studies in China?	Yes	192	48.7
	No	202	51.3
Are you keen on pursuing your next academic journey in China?	Yes	287	79.1
	No	76	20.9
Are you planning to continue your studies in abroad?	Yes	220	61.6
	No	137	38.4
Have you already completed your studies in China?	Yes	133	36.5
	No	231	63.5

Source: Author's data

Table 2 reveals that over half of the applicants (51.3%) lack prior Chinese language experience, prompting the China Scholarship Council to encourage Qatari youth to embark on a year of Chinese language study under a full scholarship, showcasing an aspect of soft power through cultural and linguistic engagement. Furthermore, a vast majority (79.1%) wish to continue their education in China post-graduation, with 61.6% considering studies abroad, outside China. Among these, 63.5% are actively pursuing further education, with three-quarters working towards a bachelor's degree in China. This aligns with Joseph Nye's (2004) view that education acts as a vehicle for cultivating soft power via cultural interaction, highlighting the pivotal role of higher education in soft power strategies.

Figure 5. *Experience of Learning Chinese and Continuing their Studies*
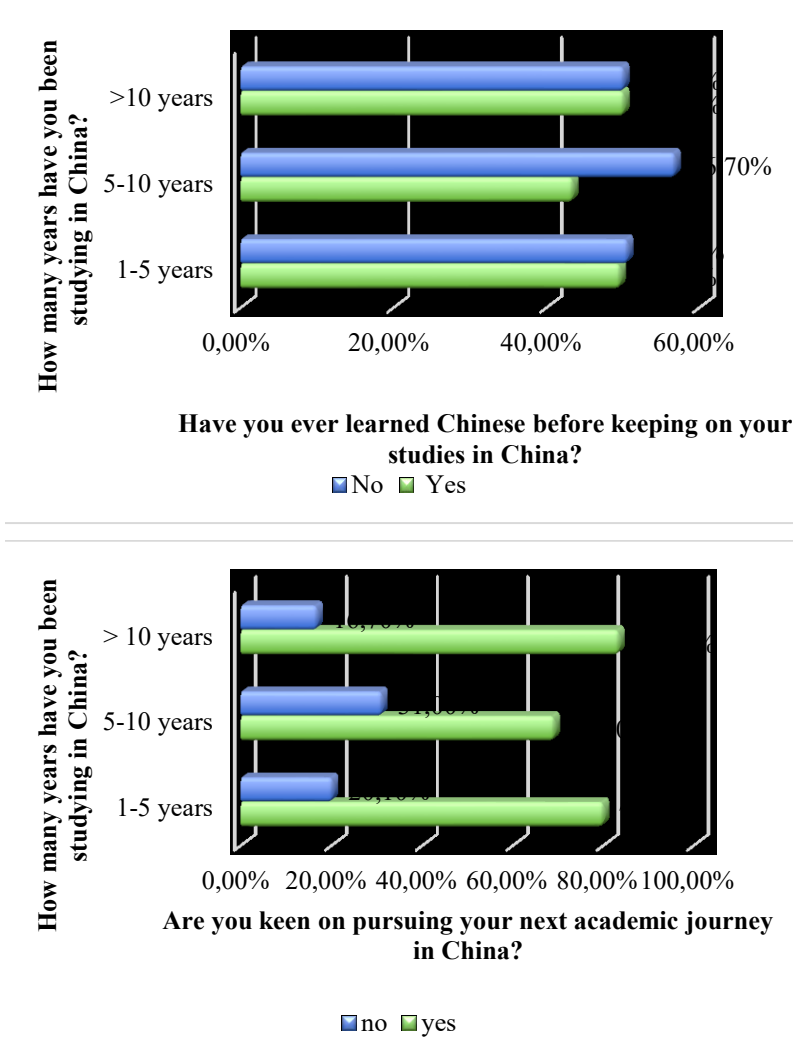
Source: Author's data

Figure 5 illustrates the correlation between the duration of studies in China and prior knowledge of the Chinese language, alongside students' intentions to con-

tinue their education in China. It shows that 50% of students who had studied in China for 1-5 years had prior Chinese language knowledge, compared to 43% of those who studied for 5-10 years. A negligible 0.5% of students with over 10 years of study experience lacked prior Chinese language skills. The figure also indicates students' desires to extend their education in China, with 80% of those studying for 1-5 years, 69% for 5-10 years, and 83% for more than 10 years expressing a preference to continue their studies. This data underscores China's significant appeal as a top educational destination globally, ranked fourth in 2020 behind the US, UK, and other countries, reflecting its strong pull among international students (Hu et al., 2019).

Figure 6. *Foreign Language and Current Position of Respondents*
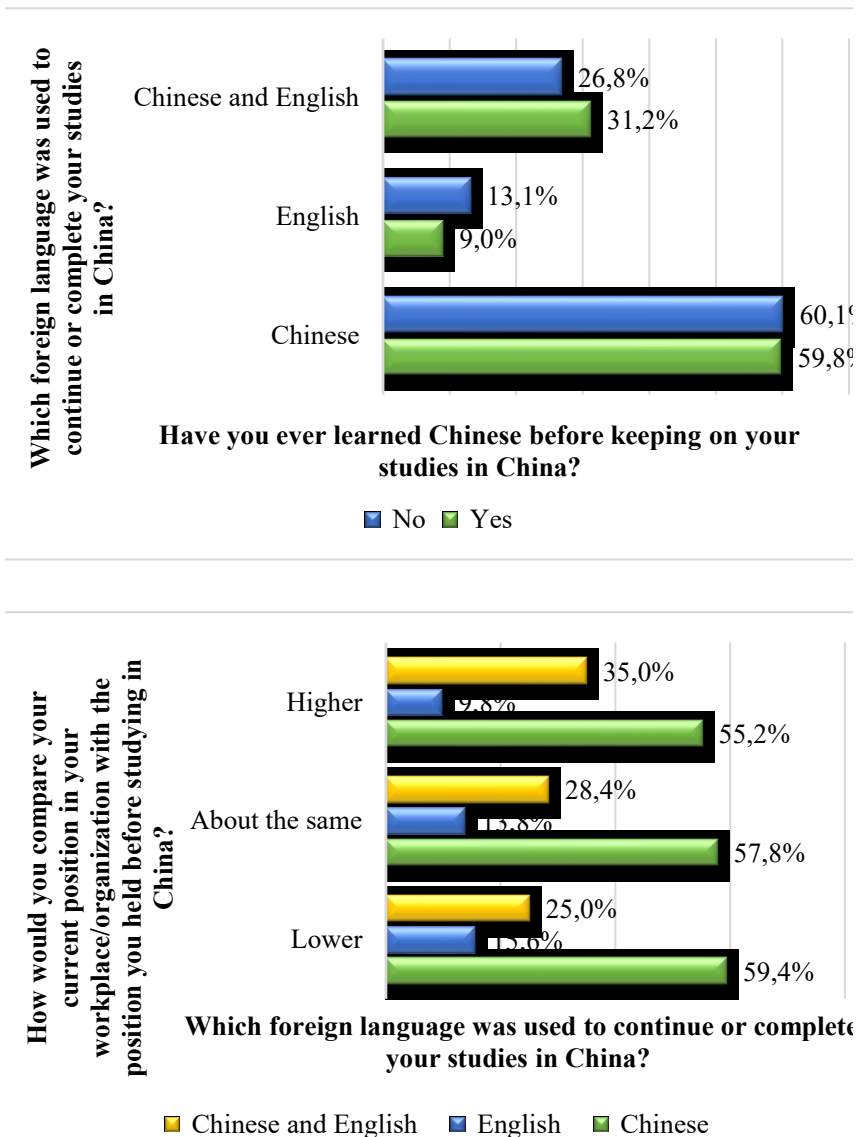
Source: Author's data

Figure 6 demonstrates the impact of prior Chinese language experience on students' educational and career outcomes in China. The data reveals consistent levels of prior Chinese language study among students before commencing their degree programs, with 60% of these students planning to continue their education after completing a preparatory year in Chinese language studies. The analysis shows minimal differences in academic progress between students enrolled in bilingual programs versus those in Chinese-only programs, suggesting that initial language proficiency does not significantly affect academic performance. The figure further indicates that being bilingual, rather than proficient in only one language, is associated with better career opportunities, highlighting the advantage of multilingual skills in career advancement.

Checking Reliability of the Instruments

Cronbach's alpha assesses variable consistency within a questionnaire, aiming to reflect the target population accurately. A value of 0.7 or higher denotes a reliable sample and questionnaire. The analysis of 63 questionnaires, using factor and individual item analysis, yielded alpha values over 0.7, indicating adequate representation for further study. Table 3 presents eight factors, their variables, loadings, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients, all exceeding 0.9, affirming their suitability for additional analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient, assessing sample adequacy for factor analysis, suggests a value above 0.6 as sufficient. Bartlett's test evaluates if the factor analysis variables measure a single dimension, with results below 0.05 confirming the likelihood of representing at least one factor.

Table 3. *Bartlett's Test of Sphericity*

KMO=.923 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=13145.933(p=.000)							
Cronbach alpha	0.968	0.946	0.918	0.932	0.897	0.923	0.881	0.884
N of items	15	10	9	7	6	5	6	5

Source: Author's data

The survey's factor analysis, detailed in Table 3, revealed a KMO measure of 0.923, indicating high sampling adequacy for factor analysis, with a significant level at 0.000, affirming data suitability. All variable loadings exceeded 0.5, except for 3.3.2 at 0.464, still considered significant. Bartlett's test showed a strong variables relationship (Chi-Square=13145.933, p=.000). The analysis delineated eight factors: Personal, Educational, Economic, and Social Improvement; Educational Comparison; Academic Help; Scholarship & Expenses; and Students' Satisfaction, each evaluated through specific questions.

Checking Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to the capability of an instrument to accurately measure the construct it is intended to measure.

- Convergent validity

This is a type of construct validity indicated by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 4. *Convergent validity*

Construct	number of items	AVEs
Personal Improvement	6	0.6
Educational Improvement	5	0.6
Economic Improvement	5	0.4
Social Improvement	10	0.5
Educational Comparison	6	0.4
Academic Help	7	0.5
Scholarship & Expenses	9	0.5
Students' Satisfaction	15	0.6

Source: Author's data

Table 4 indicates that six factors have AVEs greater than 0.50, demonstrating strong convergent validity. However, the AVEs for two factors – Economic Improvement and Educational Comparison – are below 0.5, indicating weaker convergent validity for these factors.

- Discriminant Validity

The results from testing the measurement model reveal that the factors within the model are interrelated, yet all factor loadings surpass the threshold of 0.5. Additionally, all fit indices exceed the acceptable limits that were established, supporting the discriminant validity of the instrument.

Table 5. *Discriminant Validity*

Indices	Chi-square	Degree of freedom	P	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA
acceptable thresholds	>>	>0	≤ 0.05	≤ 3	>0.9	≤ 0.08
Values	4957.937	1863	.000	2.661	1.000	0.061

Source: Author's data

As seen from Table 5 the values of CFI, CMIN/DF and RMSEA are very close to the threshold values, thus representing an acceptable model fit.

Research hypothesis

H1: For personal improvement (Factor 1), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H2: For educational improvement (Factor 2), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H3: For economic improvement (Factor 3), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H4: For social improvement (Factor 4), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H5: For educational comparison (Factor 5), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H6: For academic help (Factor 6), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H7: For scholarship and expenses (Factor 7), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H8: For student satisfaction (Factor 8), there is a significant difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

The research hypothesis suggests that students and alumni have benefited from obtaining higher education degrees from Chinese universities, achieving higher positions after completing their studies.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) and its related factors are statistically significant, demonstrating a difference in the comparison between students' current and previous positions.

H2 posits that the dimensions of China's soft power policy impacting students and alumni include Personal Improvement, Educational Improvement, Economic Improvement, Social Improvement, Educational Comparison, Student Satisfaction, Academic Help, and Scholarship and Expenses.

H3 suggests that China's soft power policy significantly affects the satisfaction levels of students and alumni. The data show that the R-square coefficient of determination explains 53% of the variance in student satisfaction, indicating a substantial impact of predictor variables on satisfaction levels. The model's statistical significance was confirmed through ANOVA testing, with a p-value of .000, demonstrating that this independent variable significantly correlates with satisfaction in distance learning.

Table 6. *Correlations between factors*

		fac1	fac2	fac3	fac4	fac5	fac6	fac7	fac8
Personal Improvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.468**	.453**	.507**	.455**	.469**	.298**	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Educational Improvement	Pearson Correlation		1	.584**	.578**	.466**	.400**	.320**	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Economic Improvement	Pearson Correlation			1	.571**	.417**	.368**	.345**	.351**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Social Improvement	Pearson Correlation				1	.588**	.501**	.329**	.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.000	.000	.000	.000
Educational Comparison	Pearson Correlation					1	.607**	.362**	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.000	.000	.000
Academic Help	Pearson Correlation						1	.424**	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)							.000	.000
Scholarship & Expenses	Pearson Correlation							1	.408**
	Sig. (2-tailed)								.000
Students' Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation								1
	Sig. (2-tailed)								

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Author's data

At the 0.01 significance level, all factors show a positive correlation with a Sig. of 0.000 (2-tailed), indicating strong interrelationships. Table 6 demonstrates moderate correlations among factors: Personal and Social Improvement have coefficients between 0.3 and 0.507; Educational and Economic Improvement range from 0.3 to 0.584; Social Improvement and Educational Comparison from 0.3 to 0.588; while Educational Comparison and Academic Help, and Academic Help and Student Satisfaction, show moderate positive correlations, with coefficients up to 0.680. These correlations suggest that educational investments through China's soft power policy are valued for the improvements they bring in students' and alumni's perceptions.

Linear Regression

Table 7. *Regression Analysis of Student Satisfaction as an independent Variable*

Model	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	R²
(Constant)	0.295	0.109		2.716	0.007	0.536
Personal Improvement	0.129	0.027	0.120	4.870	0.000	
Educational Improvement	0.011	0.029	0.011	0.392	0.695	
Economic Improvement	-0.018	0.033	-0.016	-0.538	0.591	
Social Improvement	0.092	0.033	0.079	2.789	0.005	
Educational Comparison	0.249	0.030	0.222	8.245	0.000	
Academic Help	0.425	0.027	0.414	15.864	0.000	
Scholarship & Expenses	0.079	0.022	0.079	3.649	0.000	

Note: Dependent Variable – Student Satisfaction

Source: Author's data

Table 7 indicates that the coefficient B illustrates the amount of change in the dependent variable (satisfaction) for a one-unit change in the predictor variables. This analysis reveals that Academic Help is moderately correlated with student satisfaction. Specifically, a one-unit increase in Academic Help results in a 0.425 unit increase in satisfaction.

II. a. Qualitative Data Analysis for Interview

The interviews involved 5 general and 7 specific questions across 23 participants. Researchers employed qualitative data analysis methods, using coding to interpret and summarize the interviews. A 3-cycle coding process was applied: the first cycle involved detailed coding of mentioned content without duplication; the second combined and coded content from the first; and the third analyzed combined content from the second cycle individually. The analysis also calculated individual response percentages, accounting for duplicates, to detail survey participants' general information.

1. Regarding the financial resources of the respondents studying in China, the majority of students (70.8%) and alumni rely on China's Government Scholarship, while other individuals (16.6%) depend on the Confucius Scholarship. A minority of them rely on self-funding (4.2%), and the remaining interviewees (4.2%) count on other sources of funding.

2. Considering their professional fields, 58.3% were in education, 8.3% in medicine, 4.2% in agriculture, 4.2% in construction and engineering, and 25% in other fields.

3. Regarding the academic degrees they are currently pursuing or have completed, 33.3% reported having a doctorate, 41.7% had a master's degree, and 25% had a bachelor's degree.

4. In terms of the location of their study city, 62.5% are in Changchun, 12.5% in Wuhan, 12.5% in Beijing, 4.2% in Dalian, and 4.2% in Chongqing.

5. When considering the period of education of the participants in China,

8.3% started in 2022, 25% between 2020-2023, 29.1% between 2017-2020, 12.5% between 2014-2017, and 25% selected other periods.

The majority of Qatari youths studying in China have financed their studies through government scholarships and are currently enrolled in academic programs. Many have pursued or completed degrees in education, predominantly at the master's and doctoral levels. Among the study participants, there is a significant proportion of young people who have studied in Shandong, China, or have completed their studies there, particularly between 2014 and 2020.

1.   What five things are most important to you when choosing China to study in?

Within the framework of the above question, 16 categories were sorted and coded into the first cycle, 8 categories in the second cycle, and 4 categories in the third cycle. The respondents rated the most important reasons and factors for studying in China as follows.

1. Learning Chinese history, culture, language, traveling, and expanding one's social circle (Cat 1, 10, 13, 14).

2. Reasonable cost of living, favorable condition of weather and climate, student friendly environment and safety (Cat 5, 6, 8, 12).

3. The quality of education system, highly valued ranking and reputation of universities, and improvement of individual knowledge, advance one's educational level, and promote in one's future career (Cat 2, 3, 4, 16).

4. Active engagement of Chinese Embassy, variety of encouragement for studying opportunities, attraction to development expereince and scholarship availabilty of more quotes for applicants (Cat 7, 9, 11, 15) are main reason of choosing China as their study destintation.

Figure 7. *Text Coding of the First Question*
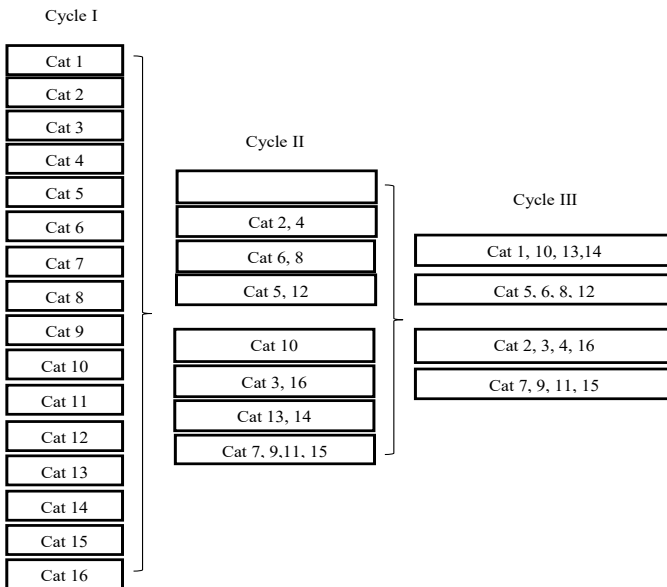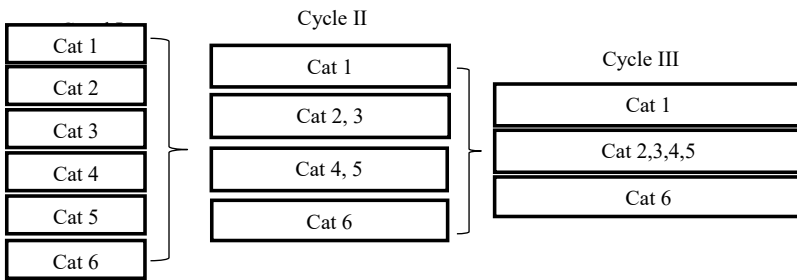

Source: Author's data

Important factors and reasons of studying in China were defined as the followings including learning culture and language, reasonable cost of living, favourable condition of weather and climate, the quality of education system, highly valued ranking and reputation of universities, Active engagement of Chinese Embassy, and scholarship availabilty of more quotes for applicants.

The most important factors of continuing their studies in China reveals that higher education institutions play a vital role in pride of the nation, development of technology, growth of economy for Chinese. Thus, government of China implement policy concerning diplomacy of education by spreading Chinese language, culture and state narratives.

2. In general, how environmentally-friendly do you think universities are?

Within the framework of the above questions, 6 categories were sorted and coded in the first cycle, 4 categories in the second cycle, and 3 categories in the third cycle (Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Text Coding of the Second Question*

Source: Author's data

Figure 8 reveals that interview participants described their universities' commitment to environmental friendliness as follows:

- The campus is beautifully maintained with an abundance of flowers and trees.

- Mopeds and electric bikes are readily available for rent, contributing to a quieter campus environment where everyone prefers riding electric bikes or mini-mopeds.

- A mini-bus service operates within the campus at a cost of 2 yuan, emphasizing regulated and accessible transportation.

- The campus is clean and abundant with trees, underlining a strong commitment to green spaces.

- Initiatives to plant a variety of trees are encouraged, reflecting active engagement in enhancing biodiversity.

- Waste management practices are commendable, with all garbage being sorted, showcasing a commitment to environmental sustainability.

- Efforts have been made to create a student-friendly environment conducive to studying, with significant strides in reducing air pollution in recent years.

- Markets have been relocated to nearby areas, ensuring convenience and reducing the carbon footprint associated with travel.

Participants highlighted that the campus and its surroundings are organized in environmentally friendly ways, fostering a conducive learning environment for student development. However, a minority of participants noted the generation of chemical waste related to their field of study, indicating an area for environmental improvement.

3.   Do you expect to return to your home country after completing your course?

In the context of the above questions, the interviewers fully expressed their willingness to contribute to the development of their country by using the academic knowledge they have learned from the Chinese people. For example, they have been contributing to spread their experience in linguistics and higher education.

4.   What are their most important priorities when choosing a university?

Within the framework of the above question, 6 categories were sorted and coded into 6 categories in the first cycle and 3 categories in the second cycle (Figure 3).

Figure 9. *Text Coding of the Fourth Question*
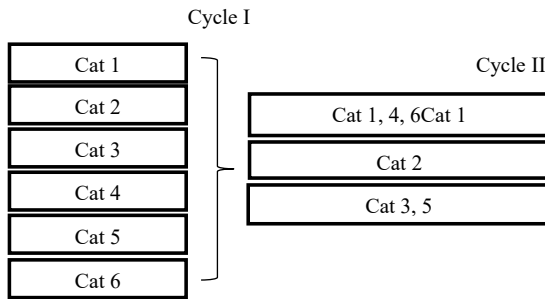
Source: Author's data

In the context of the fourth question, how and by what criteria enabled the participants to choose their universities was coded and summarized as shown in Figure 9.

- High-ranking universities recognized both domestically and internationally, a reputable education system, quality teaching, competitive lecturers, and research institutions (Cat 1, 4, 6).

- A supportive economic location, favourable climate, student-friendly studying environment, safety on university campuses, and metropolitan areas hosting universities (Cat 2).

-

- Interviewees noted excellent academic experiences, international student exchanges, transnational cultural and communication programs, encouragement of cooperation with other nations, and sharing experiences with international representatives as significant benefits (Cat 3, 5).

The result reveals that scholarship opportunity allows youths to benefit from competitive universities in international and domestic level, domestically and globally accepted high ranking universities, respectable reputation of higher education, favourable location and weather, broad range of foreign relation, great experience of cooperation, and sharing experience with representatives from different nations to pursue their academic degree in China.

**5.	Which of the following are most useful to you when making decisions about your studies?**

Within the framework of the above question, 18 categories were sorted and coded in the first cycle, 10 categories in the second cycle, and 5 categories in the third cycle (Figure 4).

Figure 10. *Text Coding of the Fifth Question*
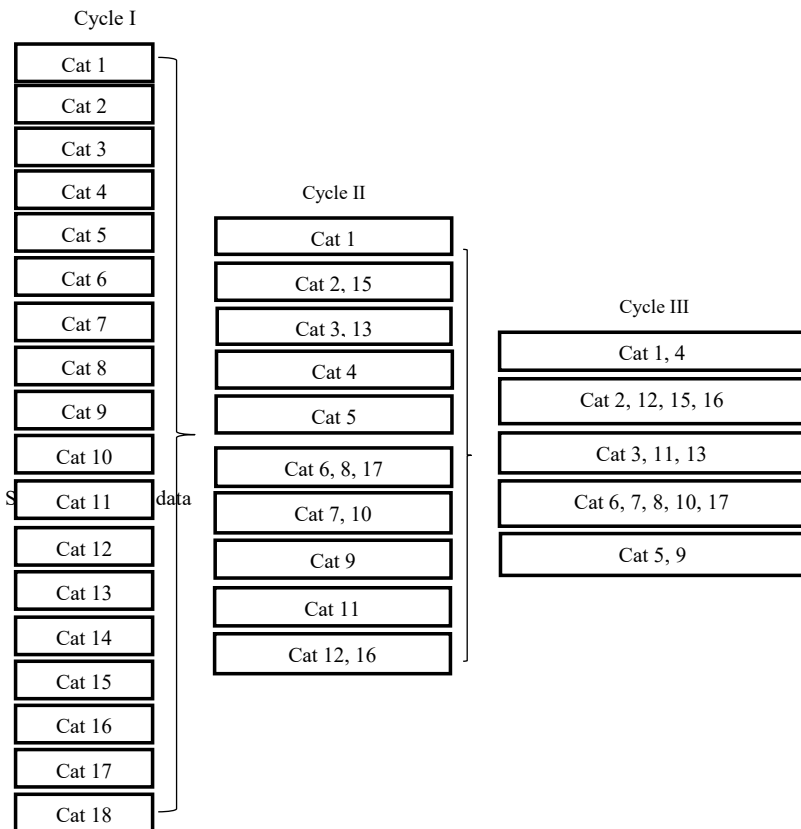
Source: Author's data

According to Figure 10, interviewees highlighted several advantages of studying in China, including:

- Universities boast qualified professors due to rigorous selection, offering unique opportunities for guest lecturers from abroad, enhancing academic dialogue. Scholarships incentivize study across various disciplines, with a satisfactory quota for China's Government scholarships (Categories 1, 4).

- The interaction with international students enriches experiences, promoting global competitiveness, affordable academic degrees, and career growth (Categories 2, 12, 15, 16).

- Learning Chinese within a native context enhances language skills and access to extensive research resources, facilitating engagement with Chinese academic materials (Categories 3, 11, 13).

- Cultural immersion, a simple lifestyle, understanding of China's growth, exploration, affordable living costs, welcoming atmosphere, safety, and peaceful environment are valued aspects of studying in China (Categories 6, 7, 8, 10, 17).

- The strategic relationship with Qatar, collaborative opportunities in various sectors, and reasonable living costs are beneficial (Categories 5, 9).

Interviewees identified several strengths of studying in China, including the effectiveness of the Chinese government's policies for international applicants, the ample availability of scholarships for candidates, the motivation to share experiences with global youth, the promotion of individual competitiveness, and the support for research resources and materials for their studies in China. Additionally, the nurturing of cultural knowledge, the opportunity to experience the development of a powerful nation, the ability to travel around China, the reasonable cost of living, and the assurance of student safety and a peaceful environment were highlighted. These aspects underscore the importance placed on strategic multifaceted relations with Qatar.

The decision to study in China demonstrates how educational investment allows China to reap mutual benefits by leveraging soft power as a host country.

6.   Thinking about your parents, how important do you think they would consider each of the following aspects of your international study to be?

Based on interview responses, when studying in China, the health-related concerns of their families and friends include health service insurance, well-being, access to healthy food, weather conditions, academic pursuits, and safe travel.

7.   What worries you most about studying in a different country?

Analysing the interview notes, students and alumni tend to face difficulties, which were summarized and ranked as follows: While there are no barriers such as language or others, they do encounter challenges like adjusting to spicy and junk food, restrictions on student work hours, homesickness, the absence of central heating systems in winter, limited Wi-Fi access for students, and differences due to culture and mindset. It can be concluded that China's soft power has been making significant inroads in Qatar, with its influence being observed in both the economy and culture.

II. b. Qualitative Data Analysis of SWOT and TOWS

The SWOT analysis, evaluating Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, is a strategic tool for organizational assessment and planning, applied here to assess the impact of China's soft power through educational investments on the youth.

Three alumni cases illustrate China's soft power in education:

1. Undergraduate: A Chinese language teacher graduate from Zhejiang Normal University (2016-2020) benefited from a Confucius Scholarship, completed her degree amid COVID-19 by following quarantine protocols, and participated in competitions.

2. Master: A Master of Arts in Chinese graduate from Tsinghua University (2017-2019) who excelled in English, German, and Chinese, took part in editing, volunteering, and teaching activities.

3. Ph.D.: An Education Ph.D. graduate from Shanghai Jiao Tong University (2017-2021) pursued her degree in English after a Chinese preparatory course, completing her studies with an online dissertation defence due to the pandemic.

Figure 11. *SWOT Analysis*

Strength	Weakness
Undergraduate:	**Undergraduate:**
-Studied Chinese in a private school from elementary school	-Language barriers in English to communicate with international students
-Completed her studies with the Confucius Scholarship for academic achievement	-Occasional misunderstandings with foreign students due to diversity of culture
-No Chinese language barriers	
-Gained her experience in Chinese culture	
-Satisfied with the same quality of education as Chinese students	
-Participated actively in variety of activities and competitions for undergraduates	

Master:	**Master:**
-Studied Chinese in Qatar at the undergraduate level	-Distance relationship with family; undergraduate students tend to commit violations such as drinking alcohol
-Acquisition of English allowed her to join the editorial team of university magazine and volunteer in Chinese language club	
-Monthly allowance enabled her to focus on her studies	-It is believed that the results of the master's level education quality is much lower than those of Chinese students studying the same field
-Exchanged experience from representatives of various nations	
-Joined a voluntary organization and participated in several activities	
Ph.D.:	**Ph.D.:**
-Academic program in English enabled her to exchange experience with representatives of various countries	-Occasional communication barrier in English
-Satisfied with attending lectures and workshop of experienced scholars from overseas	-Advanced Chinese is required to participate in regular research discussion with students of supervisor (once a week)
-A year of Chinese preparation course enabled her to learn from international students	
-A year course of Chinese enabled her to make contact in Chinese for daily communication	
Opportunities	**Threats**
Undergraduate:	**Undergraduate:**
-To continue the studies and working is acceptable	-Internship opportunities are limited for foreign students
-To participate in various activities of culture, and competitions	-Self-discipline is important
-To welcome foreigners to participate in trade fairs and business meetings	
-To improve trade relations at the international level	
Master:	**Master:**
-To continue studies for Ph.D.	-Working is prohibited for scholarship students
-To work is acceptable after graduating	-To be lack of internship same as Chinese students in same profession
Ph.D.:	**Ph.D.:**
-To concentrate only on research work because of the favourable learning environment	-To prefer to continue their studies with scholarship opportunities
-To download and using research papers from sites like CNK	

Source: Author's data

The analysis highlights that alumni benefit from their ability to exchange experiences internationally and understand Chinese culture, aided by their academic backgrounds for studying in Chinese without language barriers. They are active in diverse activities but face challenges in fluency, impacting communication. Opportunities in further education or careers for those skilled in Chinese are noted, despite restrictions on employment during studies and limited internships in China. The SWOT analysis shows China's commitment to improving education quality through Projects 211 and 985, targeting the development of elite institutions to attract top students globally.

TOWS ANALYSIS

This analysis is conducted following the SWOT analysis to determine the next steps based on insights from the SWOT analysis. Here is a brief overview of how to proceed:

1. Strength – Opportunity: Leverage strengths to maximize opportunities.

2. Strength – Threat: Use strengths to minimize threats.

3. Weakness – Opportunity: Address weaknesses by capitalizing on opportunities.

4. Weakness – Threat: Reduce weaknesses to mitigate potential threats.

As indicated above, the soft power of China in education can be assessed by analyzing opportunities and threats for academic studies to enhance the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of alumni.

Figure 12. *TOWS analysis*

1. Strength – Opportunity: Maximizing opportunity based on strength	2. Strength – Threat: Minimizing threats based on strength
Undergraduate:	**Undergraduate:**
Fluency of Chinese enables international applicant to benefit same quality of education as domestic students.	As a disciplined learner of private school under Chinese education system alumni tend to be out of immature behaviour.
Master:	**Master:**
Fluency of English and Chinese makes alumni competitive in labour market of China.	Foreign language knowledge could work as an instrument to devote for cooperate with international organizations rather than domestic internship opportunity.
Ph.D.:	**Ph.D.:**
Academic studies inspired alumni to concentrate on the studies and research in China.	Collaborative learning is acceptable for both international and domestic students with English communication.
3. Weakness – Opportunity: Improving weakness based on opportunity	4. Weakness – Threat: Minimizing weakness to avoid possible threat
Undergraduate:	**Undergraduate:**
Gaining experience due to cooperation with domestic and international partners based on improvement of English.	To encourage building collaboration with foreigners with effort for English fluency.
Master:	**Master:** To submit request to exchange experience with domestic students including same internship opportunities.
Applying a job requires foreign language and same education degree as domestic applicants in different field.	
Ph.D.: Work on research work requires English.	**Ph.D.:** To encourage them to exchange experience with domestic students in academic field.

Source: Author's data

The TOWS analysis reveals that alumni capitalize on academic experiences in China, gaining discipline and language fluency, which facilitates collaborations at various academic levels due to their maturity. It also shows that post-degree employment in China is achievable for alumni, who can leverage their bilingual skills for global career opportunities. Thus, the analysis suggests that higher education, a key aspect of soft power, can foster a globally interconnected community.

DISCUSSION

The influence of the nation is manifested through the use of non-coercive instruments, such as the educational development of individuals at the higher education level. Joseph Nye highlighted that soft power perfectly aligns with education, based on the consent of target nations rather than coercion. Research findings from a mixed methodology study indicate that students and alumni benefit from higher education institutions in China through the country's investment in education as a host nation. Notably, a majority of respondents are undergraduate representatives, which suggests they are drawn to scholarship opportunities with sufficient quotas, as opposed to the limited scholarship opportunities available from third countries.

The research findings suggest that higher education, as an essential component of foreign policy, is expanding from a domestic to a global level through educational investment. However, there is a need to promote fair competition for young people wishing to continue their studies abroad by enhancing their competencies in various skills, including the acquisition of foreign languages, both hard and soft skills, communication abilities, and academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

Various nations regard their domestic higher education institutions as pivotal, leveraging them as a foundation of soft power towards target countries because the realm of international higher education acts as a dynamic force for globalization, serving foreign policy objectives. This research aimed to explore the interplay between education and soft power, drawing on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

The correlation analysis result (.680) indicates that current students and alumni's satisfaction correlates more strongly with academic help than with their other areas of improvement. Meanwhile, China's efforts to cultivate competitive universities are effectively supported through soft power. Furthermore, a strong correlation (.588) between social improvement and educational comparison suggests that China's educational ranking is favourably viewed in terms of its global reputation. Thus, respondents prioritized improvements in education and the economy (.584) while also focusing on their social and personal development (.507).

Linear regression analysis shows that the level of satisfaction changes with academic support, suggesting that student satisfaction is contingent upon the

academic assistance provided by the host country, which underscores the effectiveness of China's soft power through education. The research hypothesis was confirmed by findings that students and alumni have benefited from obtaining higher education degrees from Chinese universities, achieving higher positions post-graduation. Interview results indicate that a sufficient quota of scholarships allows them to enrol in globally recognized Chinese higher education institutions with support from the Chinese government. Results from SWOT and TOWS analyses reveal that China is enhancing its soft power by attracting competitive applicants through investments in their education. Given China's significant investment compared to other nations, it is crucial to further investigate how soft power through education benefits target countries that receive educational support. Further studies should include a broader sample, incorporating more respondents from other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to explore the educational returns of overseas representatives beyond China.

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WATER SECURITY AND REGIONAL STABILITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The Amu Darya River, a critical water resource for Central Asia, frequently becomes a focal point of tensions between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Recent discussions regarding the Amu Darya have been reignited following the construction of a canal by the Taliban administration in 2023. This research delves into the water-related issues between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, with a particular emphasis on the significance of the Amu Darya River to the countries in the region. Adopting a historical perspective, this study systematically examines official reports, bilateral and multilateral agreements, and existing literature through comparative analysis. The findings suggest that cooperation and consensus at the bilateral level are paramount, overshadowing the contributions of regional and international organizations in resolving this issue.

Keywords: Amu Darya River, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Water scarcity, Transboundary waters, Constructivism, Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Water, essential for life on Earth, remains a focal point in the political and economic interactions among nations, both currently and foreseeably in the future. Although water disputes have not escalated into large-scale global wars over the past decade, they have often spurred regional conflicts and smaller wars, with water frequently being exploited as a strategic tool to further political objectives. Communities and nations grappling with shortages, climate variability, and the pressure of sustaining growing populations may soon face critical limits in their water reserves.

In Central Asia, the transboundary water issues between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan are particularly acute, carrying profound implications for both countries. The management and allocation of water resources in this region have historically been sources of tension; however, they also present opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefits. A thorough understanding of the historical, political, and environmental factors is crucial for devising sustainable solutions that meet the needs of both nations.

This paper explores the transboundary water relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan with an emphasis on the Amu Darya River. Originating from the confluence of the Panj and Vakhsh rivers in Tajikistan's Pamir Mountains, the Amu Darya extends over 2,400 km, passing through Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan, and ultimately draining into the Aral Sea (Ahn and Juraev, 2023: 9). The river, fed by numerous sources including rivers, glaciers, and snowpacks—significantly from about 1,000 glaciers including the Fedchenko Glacier, the largest mountain valley glacier globally – plays a pivotal role in the region's hydrology. Historically, the Amu Darya discharged most of its waters into the Aral Sea, but extensive diversion for irrigation, especially during the Soviet era, has drastically reduced its flow (Uzbekov et al., 2021).

This analysis employs a constructivist approach to examine the evolving meanings attributed to water resources within the temporal and spatial dimensions of social, political, and environmental interactions. This perspective allows for an in-depth exploration of the identities and policies that shape water management in the region. By reviewing existing literature, official reports, and bilateral and multilateral agreements, the paper adopts a comparative and analytical approach to understand the dynamics at play.

The study aims to identify the historical, political, and environmental factors contributing to water scarcity and competition between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. It seeks to uncover potential avenues for cooperation and mutual benefit in the management and distribution of water resources in Central Asia. Ultimately, this research strives to offer insights that could help formulate a comprehensive water resource management strategy, promoting dialogue and sustainable solutions for the transboundary water challenges in the region.

In conclusion, the effective management of transboundary water resources is crucial for the sustainable development and stability of countries in Central Asia. This study examines the factors influencing transboundary water management and their potential impacts, highlighting the ongoing challenges and the need for cooperative solutions between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Through a detailed empirical analysis, this research contributes to the broader discourse on conflict and cooperation in transboundary water management, underscoring the

importance of nuanced, context-driven approaches to addressing these critical issues.

Today, it is possible to evaluate any development or issue concerning international relations within the scope of any of the international relations theories and approaches and to make future predictions and explanations. However, no single approach can be expected to fully shed light on a particular event. From this perspective, a constructivist approach was adopted in this study.

In the literature on transboundary water issues, several theoretical frameworks offer insights into the dynamics of cooperation and conflict among riparian states. Neorealism, a prominent theory in international relations, posits that the distribution of power among states within a transboundary water basin significantly influences their behaviour and interactions. According to neorealism, more powerful states may attempt to dominate or control water resources, while weaker states might resist or seek alliances to balance power (Allouche, 2020: 287). The theory acknowledges the anarchic nature of the international system, which encourages states to prioritize their own interests, thus complicating cooperation over transboundary water resources (Thomas, 2016: 23). Nevertheless, neorealism also recognizes that cooperation can occur when it aligns with the self-interests of states, such as securing water supplies, preventing conflicts, or obtaining economic benefits (Hayat, 2020: 30).

Neoliberalism provides another perspective by emphasizing the role of market-based mechanisms and private sector involvement in water management. This approach advocates for the use of economic instruments, such as pricing and cost-recovery, to enhance water efficiency, allocation, and management (Furlong, 2010: 47). While neoliberalism supports the introduction of market mechanisms and privatization to address water governance challenges, the effectiveness of these policies has been contentious, with critiques highlighting potential contradictions and misalignments with the interests of all stakeholders (Hayat, 2020: 32; Sheng and Webber, 2021: 2).

Critically, mainstream theories like neorealism and neoliberalism often provide rigid and narrow explanations for how water distribution issues affect state relations, either conflictive or cooperative. Neither theory fully addresses the changes in the nature of transboundary water relations over time.

Constructivism offers a distinct approach by emphasizing the role of social constructs, norms, and identities in shaping the behaviour of states and other actors (Wendt, 1999: 20-134). Constructivists argue that water issues are not solely determined by physical scarcity or objective factors but are also shaped by the perceptions, beliefs, and interests of the actors involved (Dadabaev et al., 2023: 932). This perspective underscores the importance of understanding the social and political contexts in which water management decisions are made, including the historical relationships between states, the role of cultural and identity-driven categories in shaping water practices, and the influence of discourse and narratives on the perception of water as a common good or a source of conflict (Yan et al., 2022: 4).

A constructivist approach in the context of Central Asia, particularly between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, would examine the role of regional identity, concepts of "neighbourhood," and notions of brotherhood or fraternity in shaping water management practices and perceptions (Dadabaev et al., 2023: 934). This

approach would also consider the impact of historical relationships, the influence of water bureaucracies and epistemic communities, and the role of discourse in shaping water policies. Overall, constructivism provides a nuanced and contextualized understanding of transboundary water issues, highlighting the importance of social and political factors in shaping water management decisions and practices.

By employing Alexander Wendt's constructivist framework, this research aims to explore how shared beliefs and identities influence cooperation or conflict resolution in transboundary water management between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Wendt's theory suggests that the meanings attributed to water resources are dynamic and evolve over time and space through intersubjective processes (Reus-Smit, 2002: 490). The research, therefore, seeks to provide a more detailed understanding of the complexities involved in water-related matters within this geopolitical context, focusing on the constructed nature of these representations.

The most researches begin with a comprehensive overview of transboundary water issues in Central Asia, emphasizing the critical concerns and implications for countries in the region. The complexities of managing shared water resources are highlighted, setting the stage for more detailed studies. A seminal work, "Water Resources in Central Asia: International Context" by S.S. Zhiltsov I.S. Zonn, A.G. Kostianoy and A.V. Semenov (2018) This study covers a wide range of aspects, including historical perspectives, legal structures, institutional cooperation, conflicts, UNECE conventions, and the interconnections of water, energy, food, and the environment in Central Asia.

A more recent work published by Zheenbek Kulenbekov and Baktyiar Asanov "Water Resource Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan: Current and Future Environmental and Water Issues" (2021). This multidisciplinary collection provides insights into the current situation from a Kyrgyz perspective, addressing hydrology, glaciology, water chemistry, meteorology, and other relevant fields.

McKinney's study (2003) addresses the complexities of managing shared water resources among Central Asian countries, emphasizing the need for high-level government cooperation. It underscores the significance of high-level government cooperation to resolve issues such as the reluctance of certain countries like Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to alter existing water usage patterns that are vital for their agricultural sectors. The paper discusses historical agreements and the varying commitments made by countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan in terms of water release and energy supply. It discusses historical agreements, varying commitments, and the broader international legal frameworks guiding water utilization.

Wang et al.'s (2021) examination of the evolution of water resource management in Central Asia highlights the complex interplay of politics, emphasizing the establishment of regional institutions like the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and the Inter-State Commission for Sustainable Development in response to socio-economic and environmental challenges. It discusses the different approaches taken by the Central Asian countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, in managing their water resources amid economic constraints and emphasizes the prevalence of cooperative events over conflictive ones in water politics from 1951 to 2018.

The study by Liang Guo et al. (2016) explores the intricate transboundary water and energy conflicts in Central Asia, discussing historical and current disputes and proposing strategies for achieving water and energy security through effective regional cooperation. In the context of the Silk Road Economic Belt strategy, the paper discusses the challenges and opportunities for achieving water and energy security through effective regional cooperation, offering insights and strategies to address the imbalance between supply and demand of these pivotal resources.

Janusz-Pawletta and Gubaidullina's (2015) work emphasizes the complexities of managing shared water resources in Central Asia, focusing on the need for an integrated approach and the challenges arising from the dissolution of the centralized Soviet-era water management system. The paper highlights the challenges faced by upstream countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which need to release water in the winter to generate energy due to insufficient fossil fuel reserves, and downstream countries like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, which require water storage for summer agricultural irrigation. These conflicting needs, along with population growth and increased industrial and ecosystem demands, necessitate a new water allocation regulation. Despite international efforts like the Dushanbe Water Declaration, controversies persist, and the authors argue for mutually beneficial interstate cooperation as the key to sustainable development, political stability, and security in the region.

Several Scholars emphasizes the critical importance of safe and reliable water supplies for Afghanistan, as the paper "Challenges of transboundary water governance in Afghanistan" by Saiyed Momin Nori (2020) discusses the difficulties Afghanistan faces in managing its four major transboundary river basins shared with neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian countries. Years of continuous conflict have weakened the country's governance capabilities and economy, undermined its human capacity in policy making and strategic planning, and led to insufficient hydro-meteorological data and technical expertise in water management, leaving it excluded from cooperative water management frameworks.

Also, Dursun Yildiz's (2015) study highlights Afghanistan's economic, political, and institutional challenges in developing its water resources potential. It discusses the implications of population growth, political unrest, and limited participation in regional water agreements. The paper underscores the population growth projection, estimating an 80% increase by 2050, intensifying the demand on already stressed water resources. The transboundary nature of almost all river basins in Afghanistan, combined with its political unrest and limited participation in regional water agreements, raises concerns about potential international disputes in future water-sharing discussions.

Gofurov et al. (2023) examines the geopolitical implications of water scarcity, emphasizing how essential and shared water resources among Central Asian countries, particularly Uzbekistan, are linked to security challenges in the region. These include the effects of climate change, global warming, the drying of the Aral Sea, decreasing river water levels, agricultural reliance, and regional economic competition. The study explores historical conflicts over water resources from the Soviet era, examines the potential for regional water conflicts due to resource dependence and uneven resource distribution, such as those involving infrastructure projects like dam construction, and proposes negotiation

based on supply and demand as a potential solution for maintaining peace and cooperation.

Young-Jin Ahn and Zuhriddin Juraev's (2023) study focuses on the geopolitical and socio-economic implications of water resource distribution in Central Asia, with a specific emphasis on Uzbekistan and its neighbouring countries. The paper discusses the challenges faced by these nations, including high population density, agricultural demands, dependency on key rivers with transboundary aspects, and the potential for water use to provoke conflict.

Bo Libert and Annukka Lipponen's (2012) work explores the complex issues surrounding shared water resources in Central Asia. The study highlights conflicts between different uses of water, such as hydropower versus agriculture, and addresses the impact of land degradation and pollution. It notes the inadequacies of existing agreements, particularly the omission of Afghanistan in managing the Amu Darya River.

Bernd Kuzmits' (2006) examination delves into the challenges of water management in the Central Asian republics post-independence. The study highlights issues such as national self-interest, insufficient legislation, weak institutional frameworks, and the lack of participatory and sustainable water management practices. Kuzmits argues for a more integrated, institutionally, and politically cohesive approach, calling for the enhancement of existing transnational institutions such as IFAS and ICWC with better monitoring and enforcement powers.

In conclusion, the literature underscores the urgency of addressing transboundary water issues between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and provides valuable information on potential avenues for resolution and cooperation. However, it also reveals the multifaceted challenges and complexities involved in managing shared water resources in the region and underscore the need for comprehensive and collaborative approaches. The common aspect of the above-mentioned sources is that they generally address the transboundary water problem in the region. Therefore, the importance given to each controversial water resource, each side of the debate, and the magnitude of the issue is reduced. Thus, in this research, opinions about water sharing and its possible consequences between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, which are not specifically included in the research on water problems in Central Asia and if mentioned but paid little attention, are discussed. At the same time, this research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge by shedding light on the geopolitical nature of water management in Central Asia, emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation, sustainable development and equitable resource distribution.

BACKGROUND OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER ISSUES BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

The complex issue of transboundary water management in Central Asia is particularly pronounced between downstream nations such as Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and upstream regions, highlighting the vital role that the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers play in sustaining agriculture—a critical economic sector in these countries. For instance, Uzbekistan's agriculture, heavily reliant on irrigation for 95% of its crop production, contributed to 23.1% of its GDP in 2021, with cotton being a significant export crop crucial for the economies of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan (Statistics Agency under the President

of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2021). This underscores the strategic importance of water resources in the national security frameworks of these countries.

The region currently faces a severe water crisis, exacerbated by a projected population growth to over 100 million by 2050, with the average annual water supply per person falling below 1,000 cubic meters (Gofurov et al., 2023: 7). The degradation of the Aral Sea, which has shrunk to half its original size from being the world's fourth-largest lake, exemplifies the profound mismanagement of water resources during the Soviet era, resulting in a toxic wasteland that adversely affects both agriculture and the health of local populations (Guo et al., 2016: 2; McKinney, 2003: 6).

During the Soviet period, water management policies prioritized agricultural expansion, especially for cotton production, over environmental sustainability. This focus led to the construction of extensive dams and canals in Central Asia, favoring downstream cotton growers and causing conflicts over water allocation with upstream nations like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which were keen to develop their hydropower resources (Roberts, 2022).

Post-Soviet dissolution, the newly independent Central Asian states sought to remedy these issues through regional cooperation, culminating in the creation of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). However, Afghanistan, a major upstream contributor to the Amu Darya, has been largely excluded from these discussions, despite facing significant water management challenges due to its strategic position (Zonn et al., 2018: 245; Nori, 2020: 28).

In Afghanistan, where 90% of water resources are consumed by agriculture, which employs 80% of the workforce, water scarcity has led to severe food insecurity and economic instability. The ongoing conflict has further hindered effective water management, leaving the country susceptible to drought and compounding the transboundary water management challenges (UNEP, 2009: 9; OSCE, 2023: 8).

Tensions over water rights with neighboring countries, including Iran, underscore the broader regional implications of Afghanistan's water management issues, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to transboundary water management in Central Asia (Pikulicka-Wilczewska, 2019).

Under different leaders, from Islam Karimov to Shavkat Mirziyayev, Uzbekistan's water policy has transitioned from confrontational to more collaborative approaches, focusing on dialogue and cooperation with neighboring states. This shift is essential for addressing the challenges of water scarcity and ensuring equitable water distribution across the Central Asian republics (Lillis, 2012; Silvan, 2020).

Effective transboundary water management in Central Asia demands a multifaceted approach that incorporates political, economic, and environmental considerations. Addressing these complex challenges is crucial for securing the region's water resources, supporting sustainable agricultural practices, and fostering regional stability and cooperation.

In the broader context, the Amu Darya River, flowing from Afghanistan through Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan, remains central to the water security and agricultural needs of the region. Despite not signing the Almaty Agreement or partic-

ipating in the 1992 UN Convention on Transboundary Watercourses, Afghanistan assures Uzbekistan of continued water provision, highlighting ongoing diplomatic efforts to manage water resources effectively. This river, crucial for the irrigated lands across Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan, emphasizes the need for enhanced dialogue and cooperation among all nations sharing the Amu Darya basin (Sokolov, 2022).

The rise of the Taliban and the resultant geopolitical shifts necessitate prioritizing regional negotiations to address the challenges and opportunities in water management, a critical factor for the wellbeing of both Afghan and Uzbek populations. International cooperation, supported by organizations like the UN Economic Commission for Europe and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is imperative for facilitating sustainable solutions to these transboundary water issues (Abilgazina et al., 2020: 8). This environment demands not only dialogue but also a consensus-building approach that considers the diverse needs and security concerns of all regional stakeholders.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF WATER RESOURCES IN CENTRAL ASIA

Covering an extensive area exceeding 4 million km², Central Asia is primarily composed of deserts, semi-deserts, and dry steppes, which account for 70% of its terrain. As a result, large areas face challenges due to inadequate moisture and soil degradation. The region's water resources include surface water from rivers and lakes, groundwater, and glaciers, with the Tian Shan, Pamir Mountains, and Altai Mountains serving as the principal sources of these waters (Peña-Ramos et al., 2021: 4).

A recent report by the UNDP provides a comprehensive assessment of transboundary aquifers across Asia, identifying 129 shared aquifers covering approximately 9 million km², which is about 20% of the region's total area. Uzbekistan has the highest number of shared aquifers at 31, followed by China and the Russian Federation with 21 each, Tajikistan with 15, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with 14 each (UNDP, 2024: 103).

Water scarcity is a critical issue in Central Asia, with Uzbekistan experiencing the highest water stress levels in the region. Nations such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan face a mounting water crisis due to changing climate patterns, rapid population growth, aging infrastructure, and geopolitical tensions (Ahn and Juraev, 2023: 3; Dadabaev et al., 2023: 930; Peña-Ramos et al., 2021). This scarcity significantly threatens economic development, stability, and the social welfare of both Central Asia and the South Caucasus region.

The dependence on transboundary rivers such as the Amu Darya and Syr Darya for irrigation, especially for water-intensive crops like cotton, further intensifies the water scarcity challenge in countries including Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. According to the World Resources Institute, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan are among the most water-stressed countries globally, with droughts occurring every five years. This situation highlights the critical need for effective water management and conservation strategies (WRI, 2024).

Figure 1. *Countries Currently Experiencing Extreme High-Water Stress Annually*
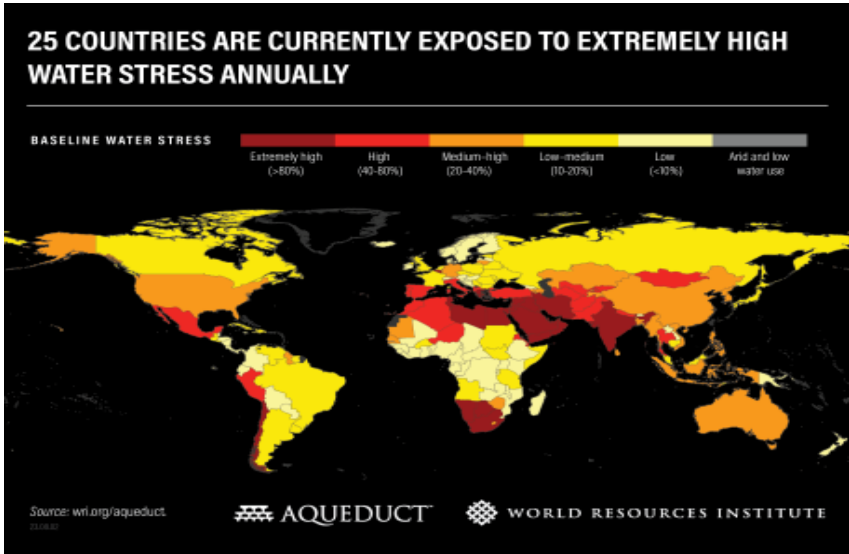
Source: WRI (2023)

Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan heavily rely on neighboring countries for their water resources, sourcing approximately 80% and 70% respectively from these regions (Jafarova, 2023). This underscores the critical importance of effective transboundary water management strategies. President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has highlighted forecasts indicating a potential 15% reduction in water volumes from the primary rivers, the Syr Darya and Amu Darya, by 2050 (Kursiv.media, 2023).

Additionally, projections by the government of Uzbekistan predict significant decreases in water volumes from the Syr Darya and Amu Darya. These forecasts anticipate a reduction of 10–15% in the Syr Darya and an even more substantial 15–20% decline in the water levels of the Amu Darya (Eurasianet.org, 2023).

Despite grappling with water scarcity, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan rank among the top water consumers globally, with Uzbekistan fourth, Azerbaijan tenth, and Kazakhstan eleventh. This paradox is largely due to lower water tariffs, which may not adequately reflect the scarcity and value of the resource (Jafarova, 2023).

Reflecting growing recognition of climate change's significant impact on the region, President Tokayev has proposed hosting a Regional Climate Change Summit in Kazakhstan in 2026. This proposal was announced during the Astana International Forum, signaling a proactive approach to addressing environmental challenges in Central Asia (Astanatimes.com, 2023).

Figure 2. *Water management in Central Asia: States and Impacts*

Source: Peña-Ramos et al., 2021:5

Drawing on insights from numerous researchers, policymakers, and international entities, the Central Asian region is recognized as a focal point for international conflicts due to flawed water policies and scarcity. Research led by Peña-Ramos and colleagues highlights that from 1991 to 2019, over 20 disputes concerning water allocation arose among five Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan (Peña-Ramos et al., 2021:3). Map 2 provides a visual representation of water resource distribution, state boundaries, and the regional and global implications of water management in Central Asia.

The primary drivers of water scarcity in the region include climate change, inefficient water management practices, escalating water consumption, and geopolitical tensions. Climate change contributes to disruptive weather phenomena such as droughts and heatwaves, significantly affecting water resources (Zhiltsov et al., 2018). Additionally, outdated irrigation systems and considerable water loss in agriculture exacerbate water depletion (Ahn and Juraev, 2023: 3; Janusz-Pawletta, 2015; Zhiltsov et al., 2018). The increasing demand for water due to population growth and economic activities, combined with inadequate infrastructure for water storage and distribution, further intensifies water scarcity in Central Asia. Moreover, geopolitical tensions among regional nations have the potential to disrupt water allocation and management, exacerbating the water crisis.

Current Water Scarcity Situation in Uzbekistan

According to the World Resources Institute (WRI, 2023), Uzbekistan is ranked 34th among 164 countries facing water shortages. The country's hydropower resources cover only 4.92% of its total territory, with annual water resources estimated at 50–60 km³. Of this, only 12.2 km³ originate within the republic, while the remainder flows from external sources—specifically, the Tien Shan and Pamir mountains and the Altai, which are fed by summer snowmelt and glaciers. A significant portion of these resources is allocated to irrigating cotton fields. With the republic's population projected to approach 40 million by 2030, available water resources are anticipated to decrease by 7-8 km³. Consequently, the current water resource deficit of 13-14% is forecasted to surge to 44-46% by 2030, posing significant challenges to agricultural and industrial development (Caneecca.org, 2023).

Furthermore, World Bank analytical data projects that water demand in Uzbekistan will rise from 59 cubic km to 62-63 cubic km by 2050, while available water resources are expected to decline from 57 cubic km to 52-53 cubic km. This escalation in water scarcity, from a current deficit of 2 cubic km to 11-12 cubic km, represents a fivefold increase, posing substantial challenges to the country's agricultural and industrial growth (Kun.uz, 2022).

Figure 3: *Agriculture Sectors and Labor Force in Central Asian States*
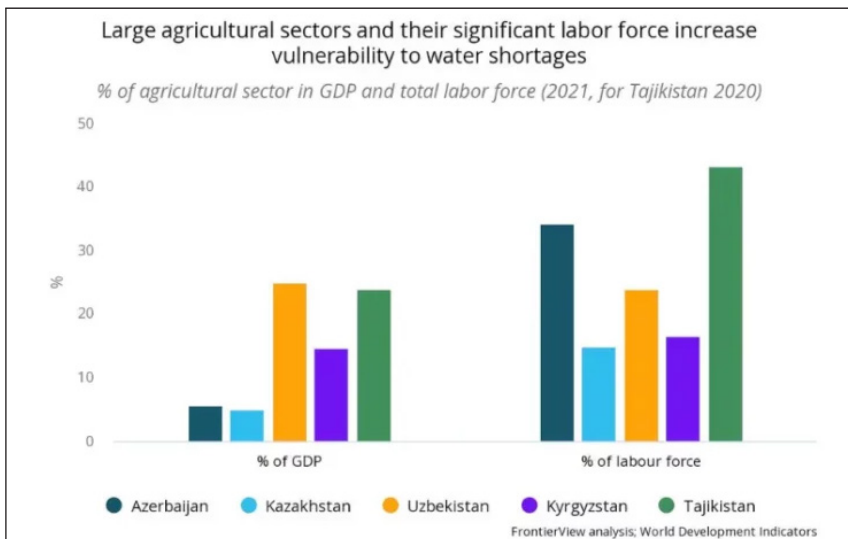
Source: Jafarova, 2023

Agriculture is a cornerstone of the economy in Central Asian countries, where it not only constitutes a significant portion of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but also employs a considerable segment of the workforce, ranging from 10% to 45%. In Kazakhstan, agriculture contributes 5.2% to the GDP, while in Turkmenistan, this figure is 7.5%. The reliance on agriculture is even more pro-

nounced in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where it accounts for 20.8% and 23.3% of their respective GDPs (Hamidov et al., 2016: 6). Similarly, in Uzbekistan, agriculture is pivotal, representing approximately 25% of its GDP and employing about 26% of the labor force (Ita.gov, 2023).

To address the escalating issue of fresh water scarcity in Uzbekistan, it is crucial to implement water conservation technologies, modernize irrigation systems, and upgrade existing drainage infrastructure. These water conservation efforts in Uzbekistan are estimated to require a budget of $10 billion, with $4 billion allocated for infrastructure upgrades and $6 billion earmarked for subsidies to support economic stakeholders, including farmers and rural communities. Moreover, the introduction of water usage fees ranging from $0.02 to $0.035 per cubic meter is deemed essential to promote conservation efforts, affecting even the smallest and least developed agricultural plots (Central.asia-news.com, 2023).

International and U.S. entities have collaborated closely with Uzbekistan to address its water-related challenges. Notably, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency has granted $500,000 to Uzsuvtaminot, Uzbekistan's national water company, to support a pilot project evaluating "digital twin" technology for remote monitoring, leakage detection, and demand prediction. Additionally, the Asian Development Bank has approved a $150 million loan coupled with a $3 million grant to enhance food and water security within the nation. Concurrently, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has funded the restoration of the Yomonjar irrigation system, significantly improving water access for approximately 34,000 residents in the Karakol and Alat districts (Usembassy.gov, 2020).

**Current State of Water Scarcity in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan's water scarcity is acute, exacerbated by factors including drought, economic instability, historical conflict, and the impacts of climate change. Ranked 40th among 164 countries for water shortages by the World Resources Institute (WRI, 2023), Afghanistan faces profound challenges. Approximately 80% of Afghan households lack sufficient water for daily needs, and a staggering 8 out of every 10 Afghans consume unsafe water. Moreover, 93% of Afghan children (15.6 million) reside in areas with high or extremely high-water vulnerability. The sanitation situation is dire, with nearly 4.2 million people practicing open defecation, half of the population lacking access to basic sanitation facilities, and over 60% without basic hygiene facilities. Additionally, about 94% of schools nationwide lack basic handwashing facilities, and approximately 35% of healthcare facilities do not have basic access to drinking water (UNICEF, 2022).

The economic downturn has further crippled Afghanistan's fragile economy, leading to a reduction in essential services such as water and sanitation, depriving millions of accesses to these basic necessities (OSCE, 2023: 25).

Agriculture remains a critical sector in Afghanistan, employing a large portion of the workforce, constituting approximately 60% of all legal exports, and contributing significantly to the country's GDP. Specifically, it accounts for 25% of the GDP, engages 40% of the labor force, and consumes over 90% of the water resources. Despite its importance, the agricultural sector struggles to meet the

food demands of the Afghan population, facing considerable challenges due to climate variability and political decisions by neighboring countries. Notably, the production of cereals and other annual crops, which contribute an estimated 23% to the agricultural GDP, plays a crucial role in sustaining the agricultural industry (Aydin-Kandemir and Yildiz, 2022: 9).

Figure 4: *Agricultural Employment in Afghanistan (%)*
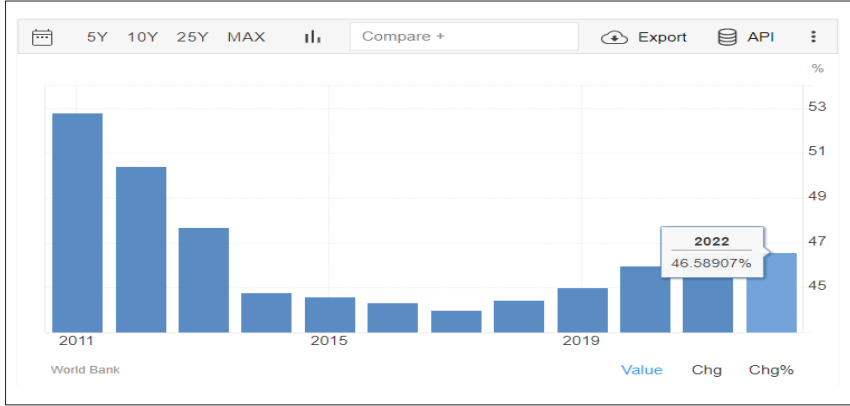
Source: Trading Economics

Currently, 20 million Afghans are experiencing severe food insecurity, with over 6 million on the brink of famine-like conditions (Ipcinfo.org, 2022). Despite two decades of rehabilitation efforts and international engagement, Afghanistan continues to struggle with significant water shortages, exacerbated by ongoing conflict, mismanagement, inadequate institutional and human capacity, and the impacts of climate change (Un-ihe.org, 2023). The country's water storage capacity is notably low, standing at only 140 m³ per capita per year, the lowest globally. In 2010, water production per capita in Kabul city was a mere 16 liters per person per day, one of the lowest rates for any city worldwide (Alliance4water.org, 2023).

Collaboration between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan

Uzbekistan plays a critical role in utilizing water resources in the Amu Darya basin and is deeply concerned about the socioeconomic and environmental challenges associated with the Aral Sea. Currently, less than 10% of irrigated land is equipped with water-saving devices. Nonetheless, the government is implementing strategies to conserve water, while farmers adopt water-conservation methods such as crop rotation, cultivating drought-resistant crops, employing drip irrigation in orchards and greenhouses, and establishing plant shelterbelts. Annually, about 50,000 hectares of tree plantings are established to rehabilitate the landscape, counter desertification, and mitigate the effects of dust storms in the Aral Sea region and densely populated areas. Uzbekistan and Afghanistan are collaborating on several critical initiatives with substantial social and economic ramifications (Umarova, 2023).

These projects include the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power transmission line, spanning 260 km, which will effectively double electricity export capacity. Additionally, efforts are ongoing to develop the technical and commercial aspects of the Termez-Mazar-e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway, which extends 600 km. Uzbekistan is providing training to Afghan students in railway vocations at Termez and aiding in the renovation of Mazar-e-Sharif airport. During 2021-2022, Uzbekistan extended humanitarian assistance to mitigate the repercussions of the Afghan crisis, including food, medication, clothing, and gasoline (OSCE, 2023: 21).

The water situation in northern Afghanistan is precarious. In 2022, a significant initiative began in Balkh to construct the Qosh-Tepa canal, spanning 280 km, intended to extract water from the Amu Darya. The quantity of water to be redirected (estimates range from 5 to 10 km³/year), the anticipated duration for the project's full functionality (five years suggested by media outlets), and the extent of agreements or communication with regional water authorities (ICWC, BWO Amu Darya), from which Afghanistan is excluded, or through bilateral means remain uncertain (OSCE, 2023: 21; Nori, 2020: 20).

Challenges and Conflicts Surrounding Water Management

The agricultural sector consumes approximately 90% of all surface and groundwater abstractions, surpassing other regions globally (Karthe et al., 2015: 492). In this context, conflicts related to water are prevalent due to scarcity and competing resource needs, often resulting in tensions. Therefore, it is crucial for nations to actively participate in dialogue, collaboration, and potentially compromise to establish sustainable resolutions.

Concerns were raised after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan about the impact on water management and cooperation with neighboring countries such as Uzbekistan (Kun.uz, 2023). The Taliban's control over certain districts, as well as their policies, have the potential to disrupt established water-sharing agreements and arrangements.

Water conflicts may be complex, encompassing aspects such as infrastructure development, agriculture, and even geopolitical ramifications. It is imperative for governments to devise strategies to cooperate and provide fair and equal access to water resources for all stakeholders.

The relationship between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan is complex, characterized by their close proximity, cultural ties, and shared economic interests. The two nations share a 143-kilometer boundary, establishing significant mutual reliance. The construction of a bridge in 1981 aimed to enhance trade between the two states, but it eventually facilitated the passage of Soviet soldiers into Afghanistan (Shabad, 1982). Following the Taliban's consolidation, Uzbekistan, like other neighboring countries, has been concerned about potential spillover effects of the conflict, including refugee influx, the spread of extremist ideologies, and regional destabilization. In response, Uzbekistan has implemented proactive strategies such as enhancing border security, intensifying military collaboration with neighboring countries, and participating in diplomatic initiatives to foster peace and stability in Afghanistan.

IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL COOPERATION: A SWOT ANALYSIS

To thoroughly assess the factors impacting the significance of regional cooperation for water security and stability in Central Asia, with a particular focus on Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, a SWOT analysis was conducted. This analysis aims to provide insight into the current circumstances, challenges, and opportunities within the region's water management landscape.

Strengths

Historical and Cultural Ties: Uzbekistan and Afghanistan share a rich history and cultural connections that provide a solid foundation for collaboration. The longstanding reliance of Uzbekistan on water flow from upstream countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, has cultivated robust traditional water management practices, which could support cooperative strategies. This interdependence necessitates collaboration across all Central Asian republics to address shared water challenges, particularly during peak water usage in summer (Zhiltsov et al., 2018).

Natural Resources: Both countries are endowed with significant water resources, presenting opportunities for joint management and sustainable development.

Geopolitical Interest and Improved Regional Relations: There is strong international interest from neighboring countries and global organizations in promoting stability and cooperation in the region. Under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in improving regional relationships by easing tensions and fostering collaboration, marked notably by the removal of objections to hydropower projects in neighboring countries and potential financial participation in these projects (Gofurov et al., 2023).

Existing Agreements: A framework of international agreements and regional initiatives already exists, which can facilitate enhanced cooperation on water management and security.

Diversification of Agriculture: The substantial reduction in cotton cultivation area reflects Uzbekistan's commitment to diversifying its agricultural practices, thereby reducing dependence on water-intensive crops and promoting sustainable water management (World Bank, 2020).

Weaknesses

Dependence on Upstream Countries: Uzbekistan's heavy reliance on water from upstream countries exposes it to vulnerabilities related to water availability and the water management policies of these countries. This dependence is critical for its agricultural sector, especially cotton production.

Limited Bilateral Agreements: The absence of comprehensive bilateral agreements between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, and other riparian states of the Amu Darya basin, limits effective water management and cooperation, raising the potential for conflicts (Abdullayev, 2020; Janusz-Pawletta, 2018).

Political Instability: Internal political challenges in both Uzbekistan and Afghanistan may impede efforts for regional cooperation.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Outdated irrigation systems and inadequate infrastructure can hinder effective water management initiatives.

Socio-economic Disparities: Economic development and resource allocation disparities between the two countries may challenge equitable cooperation.

Lack of Trust: Historical conflicts and geopolitical tensions could undermine trust and hinder collaboration between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Opportunities

Regional Collaboration: The evolving diplomatic landscape and regional integration efforts present significant opportunities for Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to engage in dialogue and establish cooperative frameworks for transboundary water management. This collaboration could lead to the creation of institutional frameworks addressing both immediate and long-term water management challenges, promoting sustainable development and regional stability (Jalilov et al., 2015; Nori, 2020).

International Support: Access to international funding and technical expertise could bolster joint initiatives for water security and stability, enhancing the capacity for effective water management and infrastructure development.

Economic Benefits: Enhanced regional cooperation on water management could lead to greater economic opportunities, including advancements in agriculture and water-related industries.

Environmental Sustainability: Collaborative efforts can promote sustainable water use and conservation, benefiting both countries and the broader region.

Peacebuilding: Joint projects and shared goals in water management can serve as confidence-building measures, promoting peace and stability in the region.

Threats

Climate Change: Altered weather patterns and increased drought frequency may exacerbate water scarcity, challenging regional cooperation.

Geopolitical Tensions: Competing interests among regional powers and neighboring countries could escalate conflicts and undermine cooperative efforts.

Resource Competition: Limited water resources and competing demands from various sectors may lead to tensions over water allocation.

Security Risks: Regional instability, including the presence of armed groups and transnational threats, can significantly challenge collaborative efforts and hinder progress towards water security.

Environmental Degradation: Pollution and unsustainable water use practices could worsen water quality and ecosystem health, undermining efforts towards regional cooperation and stability.

This SWOT analysis highlights the complexity of transboundary water management in Central Asia, especially between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates diverse strategies to enhance cooperation and ensure long-term regional water security and stability.

CONCLUSION

The transboundary water management issues between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, particularly regarding the Amu Darya River, are of critical importance not only to the bilateral relations of these nations but also to the broader stability of the Central Asian region. Tensions have been exacerbated by the initiation of the Afghanistan Canal project in 2023, highlighting the strategic significance of these water resources on a regional and global scale.

This study employs a Constructivist framework to analyze the complexities involved in managing water resources between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, seeking to uncover the underlying factors that influence both conflict and cooperation in this arena. The research findings reveal significant shifts in identities and inter-state relations, which are central to understanding the dynamics at play in transboundary water management.

Historically, the Central Asian states, including Uzbekistan, were integrated into the centrally managed Soviet Union, which suppressed national distinctions to promote a unified Soviet identity. In contrast, Afghanistan remained outside this structure, following a distinct historical trajectory that was significantly influenced by the Soviet military presence from 1979 to 1989. The post-Soviet era marked a period of identity transformation for these nations as they navigated the legacies of Soviet rule and sought to establish stable, independent national identities. The ascent of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2021 has further influenced these dynamics, challenging both nations to maintain stability and rule of law through broadly recognized and stable national identities.

The analysis of empirical data from this case study highlights that the identities of the involved states, shaped by historical, political, and social factors, are deeply intertwined with their national interests and state relations. This interconnection is crucial in understanding the propensity for both cooperation and conflict over shared water resources such as the Amu Darya River. The findings suggest that the fluctuating relations among the states involved are closely linked to changes in how transboundary waters are perceived and managed, influenced by intersubjective processes related to national interest and identity.

In conclusion, enhancing regional cooperation in the management of transboundary water resources is imperative for promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in Central Asia. By fostering dialogue and cooperation, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan can develop a framework for mutually beneficial management of the Amu Darya River, which could serve as a model for other transboundary water management efforts globally. Such collaborative endeavors are not only vital for regional stability but also bring substantial economic benefits, including improved agricultural yields and enhanced access to clean water, which contribute to overall regional prosperity. The SWOT analysis also underscores the intricate dynamics of transboundary water management in Central Asia, emphasizing the pivotal role of regional cooperation, particularly between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Despite inherent challenges such as dependence on upstream countries and political instability, opportunities abound, including evolving diplomatic relations, international support, and economic benefits. However, threats like climate change and geopolitical tensions loom large, demanding a comprehensive approach to foster collaboration, ensure sus-

tainable water management, and fortify regional stability in the face of complex challenges.

To further support these outcomes, the study proposes several strategic recommendations for policymakers and the academic community:

Implement Reciprocal Training and Study Visits: these initiatives should aim to enhance technical and administrative capacities, fostering mutual understanding and sharing of best practices in water management.

Enhance Information Exchange: Establishing mechanisms for transparent and regular information sharing among all riparian states is crucial for building trust and formulating effective water management strategies.

Strengthen Mutual Understanding and Cooperation: it is essential to promote a deep understanding of each riparian state's perspectives and to identify opportunities for cooperation that provide mutual benefits.

Promote Regional Integration and Inclusivity: including Afghanistan in regional agreements and organizations such as the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) is critical. This inclusion would facilitate comprehensive approaches to water management that incorporate all regional stakeholders.

These recommendations, if implemented effectively, could significantly mitigate the risks of conflict and enhance the prospects for sustainable peace and development in the region. Through committed international collaboration and robust regional dialogue, the nations of Central Asia can address the challenges of transboundary water management and secure a more stable and prosperous future for all involved.

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BOOK REVIEW

FROM PAST TO PRESENT: UKRAINIANS AND UKRAINE

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On the international stage, Ukraine remains a prominent subject, particularly in the aftermath of the Ukraine-Russia crisis, retaining its position as a key topic on the agenda. Numerous recent studies have concentrated on Ukraine, garnering attention from experts worldwide. Among these works is the book titled "From Past to Present: Ukrainians and Ukraine", edited by Prof. Dr. Salih Yılmaz and others, which was published in February 2024. The objective of this book is to furnish a comprehensive account of Ukrainians and Ukraine spanning from historical origins to contemporary times, with a particular focus on the emergence and foundational aspects of Ukrainians and Ukraine. The book is structured into three sections, comprising a total of 14 chapters.

The inaugural section of the book comprises four chapters under the title "The Political History of Ukraine and the Dynamics of Religion, Language, and Culture". These chapters delve extensively into various subjects, from the foundational history of Ukraine, tracing its origins from the Kyiv Principality to the era of the Crimean Khanate. Additionally, the historical trajectory of the Ukrainian region from its inception to the Mongol invasion, shed light on the influence wielded by the Ottoman Empire in the formation of the Ukrainian nation-state. Furthermore, the chapters examine the intricate dynamics characterizing the relationship between Ukraine and the Russian Empire within the historical evolution of the Ukrainian language.

In this section, it is noted that the earliest historical reference to Ukraine dates back to the 12th century. Initially, the Kiev Principality was characterized as a joint state comprising both Russians and Ukrainians. However, this unity gradually disintegrated, particularly with the advent of the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century, which impacted the entire Slavic region. As the Moscow Principality ascended towards the end of the Golden Horde period, Russians consolidated power, while Ukraine, engaging with Poland and Hungary, under-

went a distinct developmental trajectory. Notably, the divergence between Russian and Ukrainian identities heightened, especially in Western Ukraine, with the proliferation of Catholicism, marking a pronounced schism between the two. Despite Russia's establishment of a vast empire encompassing Ukraine, it is underscored that Ukrainian identity endured. Moreover, the cohesion between Turkish and Ukrainian histories endured until the 19th century, fostering robust cooperation between the two nations. However, in the 20th century, this unity waned due to Russian influence. Additionally, it is observed that Cossacks have played a pivotal role in Ukrainian history since the 16th century, laying the groundwork for the formation of the Ukrainian nation.

In this section, the evolution and connotations of terms such as "Ukraine", "Moskof", "Little Russia", and "Great Russia" have been elucidated. Additionally, the advancement of the old Ukrainian language and literature within both the Russian state and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has been outlined. Furthermore, the emergence of new Ukrainian literature and the evolution of the modern literary Ukrainian language during the late 18th and 19th centuries have been delineated. Moreover, a critical examination has been conducted on the prohibitions imposed on the Ukrainian language and culture within the Russian Empire, with particular attention to the ramifications of these restrictions.

In the second part, titled "Identity and Nationalism in Ukraine", a comprehensive exploration of various themes is undertaken. This includes an analysis of the portrayal of Ukraine and Ukrainians within Russian nationalism, as well as an examination of the Russification policies implemented in Ukraine during the Soviet era. The pivotal role played by figures such as Taras Shevchenko and the "Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood" in shaping Ukrainian nationalism is also investigated. Furthermore, the section delves into the spiritual dimension of the Russia-Ukraine War, contextualizing it within the framework of the concept of homeland. It is highlighted that contemporary Russian nationalists encounter difficulty in acknowledging the existence of Ukraine and Ukrainians as a distinct country and nation. Importantly, it is noted that this reluctance to accept Ukrainian sovereignty existed even before the crises in Crimea and Donbas.

It is observed that the persistent implementation of Russification policies, evident in both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, aimed at assimilating non-Russian ethnic groups, stands out as a notable example of continuity between Russian Empire and Soviet Russia. Moreover, the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, which counted among its members the renowned Ukrainian thinker and writer Taras Shevchenko, is recognized for its significant role in laying the intellectual groundwork for the Ukrainian national struggle. Shevchenko's literary works, which made substantial contributions to the advancement of modern Ukrainian literature and language, are highlighted as instrumental in this process. Consequently, Shevchenko emerges as one of the foremost figures of 19th-century Ukrainian nationalism.

In the third and concluding part, titled "Law, Diplomacy, and War in Ukraine", a wide array of topics is examined. These include an in-depth analysis of the Russia-Ukraine War, focusing on aspects such as trade in the Black Sea, trade law, and international legal practices. Additionally, the repercussions of the naval blockade on humanitarian law within the context of the Russia-Ukraine War are explored. The section also delves into the realm of digital and social diplo-

macy, investigating the evolving landscape of diplomacy in the New Ukraine. Furthermore, attention is directed towards the aviation industry and its development in Ukraine, shedding light on its significance within the country's broader socio-economic framework. Moreover, the dynamics of Ukraine-Kazakhstan relations are scrutinized within the backdrop of the ongoing war, considering external factors and the prevailing circumstances. Finally, a comprehensive examination of Ukraine's experience with the Russian hybrid war is undertaken, offering insights into the multifaceted nature of contemporary conflict in the region.

In this section, a critical analysis is conducted on the erosion of international law, trade law, and the role of international organizations in the conflicts unfolding in Ukraine and Palestine. This erosion is attributed to the influence wielded by dominant powers in these conflicts and the architects of the global system. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the emergence of new dynamics in the Black Sea region as a consequence of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The significance of agreements such as the Grain Corridor Agreement and the energy corridor in the Black Sea is emphasized, underscoring their pivotal role in regional stability and economic development.

The book "From Past to Present: Ukrainians and Ukraine" constitutes a significant scholarly endeavor, offering nuanced insights into the emergence, conceptual elucidation, and delineation of Ukrainians and Ukraine. Particularly pertinent amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it stands as a formidable resource countering Russia's Russification policies and propaganda. The book provides a comprehensive examination of the formation of Ukrainian identity, encompassing aspects such as language, religion, and territoriality. Furthermore, it delves into pertinent war-related topics, including Ukraine's weapons programs, diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, and the intricate intersections of international law and diplomacy. In its thorough exploration, the book furnishes a wealth of information that contributes to a deeper understanding of Ukrainian history, identity, and contemporary geopolitical dynamics.

It's worth noting that the book lacks coverage of topics such as Ukraine's political structure, economy, relations with other international actors, and its position in the international arena. However, its historical research and thorough analysis of Ukraine and Ukrainians render it a valuable resource for comprehending these subjects. It offers insights into Ukraine's emergence and contributes to a deeper understanding of its people. Therefore, I recommend it to anyone curious about Ukraine and Ukrainians, as it provides valuable insights into their history and identity.

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3. Fill in all the required information concerning your submission and then upload the word file of your article to the system. **Make sure** that the word file you upload **does not** include an author name.

4. Once you make sure that all the required areas have been filled in, click "Send".

5. After submitting your article, make sure you see this statement on the screen: "Your data have been successfully entered."

6. Check to see if your article has been submitted from "My Submissions".

NOTES:

1. You will receive automatically generated emails when your article has been received and at every stage of the evaluation process.

2. Enter the information on your area of research even if you are not an Associate Professor or have not received tenure. It is essential that you fill in this information since articles are assigned to reviewers by using this information.

3. Please email info@eurasian-research.org regarding any queries regarding the system.

Publication fees

There are no submission fees, publication fees or page charges for this journal.

Style Guidelines

The following rules should be observed while preparing an article for submission to *Eurasıan Research Journal*:

1. Title of the article: The title should suit the content and express it in the best way, and should be written in **bold** letters. The title should consist of no more than 10-12 words.

2. Name(s) and address(es) of the author(s): The name(s) and surname(s) of the author(s) should be written in **bold** characters, and addresses should be in normal font and italicized; the institution(s) the author(s) is/are affiliated with, their contact and e-mail addresses should also be specified.

3. Abstract: The article should include an abstract in English at the beginning. The abstract should explain the topic clearly and concisely in a minimum of 75 and a maximum of 150 words. The abstract should not include references to sources, figures and charts. Keywords of 5 to 8 words should be placed at the end of the abstract. There should be a single space between the body of the abstract and the keywords. The keywords should be comprehensive and suitable to the content of the article. The English and Russian versions of the title, abstract and keywords should be placed at the end of the article. In case the Russian abstract is not submitted, it will be added later by the journal.

4. Body Text: The body of the article should be typed on A4 (29/7x21cm) paper on MS Word in Size 12 Times New Roman or a similar font using 1,5 line spacing. Margins of 2,5 cm should be left on all sides and the pages should be numbered. Articles should not exceed 8.000 words excluding the abstract and bibliography. Passages that need to be emphasized in the text should not be bold but italicized. Double emphases like using both italics and quotation marks should be avoided.

5. Section Titles: The article may contain main and sub-titles to enable a smoother flow of information. The main titles (main sections, bibliography and appedices) should be fully capitalized while the sub-titles should have only their first letters capitalized and should be written in bold characters.

6. Tables and Figures: Tables should have numbers and captions. In tables vertical lines should not be used. Horizontal lines should be used only to separate the subtitles within the table. The table number should be written at the top, fully aligned to the left, and should not be in italics. The caption should be written in italics, and the first letter of each word in the caption should be capitalized. Tables should be placed where they are most appropriate in the text. Figures should be prepared in line with black-and-white printing. The numbers and captions of the figures should be centered right below the figures. The figure numbers should be written in italics followed by a full-stop. The caption should immediately follow the number. The caption should not be written in italics, and the first letter of each word should be capitalized. Below is an example table.

Table 1. *Information Concerning Publications in Eurasian Research Journal*

| Publication type	Number of publication	Number of pages			Number of references		
		N	X	SS	N	X	SS
Article	96	2,042	21.3	7.5	2,646	27.6	15.8
Book review	4	30	7.5	4.4	31	7.8	8.3
Total	100	2,072	20.7	7.9	2,677	26.8	16.1

Source: Statistical Country Profiles

7. Pictures: Pictures should be attached to the articles scanned in high-resolution print quality. The same rules for figures and tables apply in naming pictures.

The number of pages for figures, tables and pictures should not exceed 10 pages (one-third of the article). Authors having the necessary technical equipment and software may themselves insert their figures, drawings and pictures into the text provided these are ready for printing.

Below is an example of a picture.

Picture 1. *Ancient Rune script*
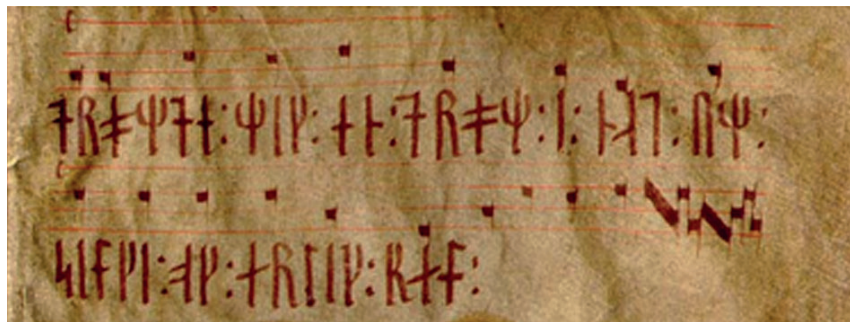
Source: en.wiktionary.org

8. Quotations and Citations: Direct quotations should be placed in quotation marks. Quotations shorter than 2.5 lines should be placed within the flowing text. If the quotation is longer that 2.5 lines, it should be turned into a block quote with a 1.5 cm indentation on the right and left, and the font size should be 1 point smaller. Footnotes and endnotes should be avoided as much as possible. They should only be used for essential explanations and should be numbered automatically.

Citations within the text should be given in parentheses as follows:

(Koprulu 1944: 15)

When sources with several authors are cited, the surname of the first author is given and 'et. al' is added.

(Gokay et al. 2002: 18)

If the text already includes the name of the author, only the date should be given:

In this respect, Tanpinar (1976: 131) says …

In sources and manuscripts with no publication date, only the surname of the author should be written; in encyclopedias and other sources without authors, only the name of the source should be written.

While quoting from a quotation, the original source should also be specified:

Koprulu (1926, qtd. in Celik 1998).

Personal interviews should be cited within the text by giving the surnames and dates; they should also be cited in the bibliography. Internet references should always include date of access and be cited in the bibliography.

www.turkedebiyatiisimlersozlugu.com [Accessed: 15.12.2014]

9. Transliteration of Ukrainian to English

Transliteration from the Ukrainian to the Latin alphabet should follow the system officially approved by the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers in 2010 (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/docs/26th-gegn-docs/WP/WP21_Roma_system_Ukraine%20_engl._.pdf). When transliterating place names, Ukrainian names are preferred to Russian equivalents: for example, Mykolaiv rather than Nikolaev, Kyiv rather than Kiev. However, for historical references

to Ukrainian cities, it may be appropriate to use Russian names if they were in wide use at the time.

Please, use UK English in your manuscript.

10. References: References should be placed at the end of the text, the surnames of authors in alphabetical order. The work cited should be entered with the surname of the author placed at the beginning:

Example:

Isen, Mustafa (2010). *Tezkireden Biyografiye*. Istanbul: Kapi Yay.

Koprulu, Mehmet Fuat (1961). *Azeri Edebiyatinin Tekamulu*. Istanbul: MEB Yay.

If a source has two authors, the surname of the first author should be placed first; it is not functional to place the surname of the other authors first in alphabetical order.

Example:

Taner, Refika and Asim Bezirci (1981). *Edebiyatimizda Secme Hikayeler*. Basvuru Kitaplari. Istanbul: Gozlem Yay.

If a source has more than three authors, the surname and name of the first author should be written, and the other authors should be indicated by et.al.

Example:

Akyuz, Kenan et al. (1958). *Fuzuli Turkce Divan*. Ankara: Is Bankasi Yay.

The titles of books and journals should be italicized; article titles and book chapters should be placed in quotation marks. Page numbers need not be indicated for books. Shorter works like journals, encyclopedia entries and book chapters, however, require the indication of page numbers.

Example:

Berk, Ilhan (1997). *Poetika*. Istanbul: Yapi Kredi Yay.

Demir, Nurettin (2012). "Turkcede Evidensiyel". *Eurasıan Research Journal*, *Turk Dunyasi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 62(2): 97-117. doi: https://doi.org/10.53277/2519-2442-2021.2-01.

Translator's, compiler's and editor's names (if there are any) should follow the author and title of the work:

Example:

Shaw, Stanford (1982). *Osmanli Imparatorlugu*. Trans. Mehmet Harmanci. Istanbul: Sermet Matb.

If several references by the same author need to be cited, then the name and surname of the author need not be repeated for subsequent entries following the first entry. A long dash may be used instead. Several references by the same author should be listed according to the alphabetical order of work titles.

Example:

Develi, Hayati (2002). *Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesine Gore 17. Yuzyil Osmanli Turkcesinde Ses Benzesmesi ve Uyumlar.* Ankara: TDK Yay.

_____ (2003). *XVIII. Yuzyil İstanbul Hayatina Dair Risale-i Garibe.* Istanbul: Kitabevi.

If **more than one work by the same author of the same date** need to be cited, they should be indicated by (a, b).

Example:

Develi, Hayati (2002a). *Evliya Celebi Seyahatnamesine Gore 17. Yuzyil Osmanli Turkcesinde Ses Benzesmesi ve Uyumlar.* Ankara: TDK Yay.

Develi, Hayati (2002b). *XVIII. Yuzyil Istanbul Hayatina Dair Risale-i Garibe.* Istanbul: Kitabevi

For **encylopedia entries**, if the author of the encylopedia entry is known, the author's surname and name are written first. These are followed by the date of the entry, the title of the entry in quotation marks, the full name of the encyclopedia, its volume number, place of publication, publisher and page numbers:

Example:

Ipekten, Haluk (1991). "Azmi-zâde Mustafa Haleti". *İslam Ansiklopedisi.* C. 4. Istanbul: Turkiye Diyanet Vakfi Yay. 348-349.

For **theses and dissertations**, the following order should be followed: surname and name of the author, date, full title of thesis in italics, thesis type, city where the university is located, and the name of the university:

Example:

Karakaya, Burcu (2012). *Garibi'nin Yusuf u Zuleyha'si: Inceleme-Tenkitli Metin-Dizin*. Master's Thesis. Kirsehir: Ahi Evran Universitesi.

Handwritten manuscripts should be cited in the following way: Author. Title of Work. Library. Collection. Catalogue number. sheet.

Example:

Asım. *Zeyl-i Zubdetu'l-Es'ar*. Millet Kutuphanesi. A. Emiri Efendi. No. 1326. vr. 45a.

To cite **a study found on the Internet**, the following order should be followed: Author surname, Author name. "Title of message". Internet address. (Date of Access)

Example:

Turkiye Cumhuriyet Merkez Bankasi. "Gecinme Endeksi (Ucretliler)" Elektronik Veri Dagitim Sistemi. http://evds.tcmb.gov.tr/ (Accessed: 04.02.2009).

An article accepted for publication but not yet published can be cited in the following way:

Example:

Atilim, Murat ve Ekin Tokat (2008). "Forecasting Oil Price Movements with Crack Spread Futures". *Energy Economics*. In print (doi:10.1016/j.eneco.2008.07.008).

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING BOOK REVIEWS

Apart from Academic Articles, the Eurasian Research Journal (ERJ) publishes Book Reviews. Usually, there are two Book Reviews published in each issue of the journal. The following rules should be observed while preparing a Book Review for submission to the ERJ:

1. The topic of the book should match with the scope of the ERJ.

2. Only reviews on recently published books are accepted. The book that is to be to reviewed must be published within less than a year before the intended date of the publication of ERJ.

3. A Book Review should contain a concise description, critical view, and/or evaluation of the meaning and significance of a book. A normal Book Review should contain approximately 800-1000 words.

4. Name(s) and address(es) of the author(s): The name(s) and surname(s) of the author(s) should be written in bold characters, and addresses should be in normal font and italicized; the institution(s) the author(s) is/are affiliated with, their contact and e-mail addresses should also be specified.

5. The text of a Book Review should be typed on A4 (29/7x21cm) paper on MS Word in Size 12 Times New Roman or a similar font using 1.5 line spacing. Margins of 2.5 cm should be left on all sides and the pages should be numbered.

6. Tables and Figures should not be used in a Book Review.

7. All Author(s) should refrain from using contractions, first or second person viewpoints, incomplete sentences, ambiguous terminology, and slang, informal style as well as wordy phrases.

8. Author(s) are recommended to proofread and copyedit their Book Review prior to submitting.

Book Reviews should be submitted using the Manuscript Handling System option at http://erj.eurasian-research.org/yonetim/login/index.php